

Parma Violets' for Marcel Proust

You wear your heart pinned to your sleeve
when you're with a woman like that.
The kind who wears crêpe de chine
in the mornings,
the kind who has to look
just a certain way
when she undresses for a man.
It's not true what they're saying
about a woman like that;
you only believe what she tells you.
And yet, standing on the current
fashionable street,
in May, in the morning,
as you offer her a bunch of violets
to match her evening robe,
when she looks at you,
you know she understands.
The shade of her parasol draws you close,
and just for a moment,
beneath the laurel trees,
you think you love her perfectly,
you think you'll never love again,
you think she touches you
the way no one else ever can.

—*Carolyn Smart*