

Valedictory, Aldous Huxley

Valedictory

I had remarked—how sharply one observes  
When life is disappearing round the curves  
Of yet another corner, out of sight!—  
I had remarked when it was "good luck" and "good night"  
And "a good journey to you," on her face  
Certain enigmas penned in the hieroglyphs  
Of that half frown and queer fixed smile and trace  
Of clouded thought in those brown eyes,  
Always so happily clear of hows and ifs—  
My poor bleared mind!—and haunting whys.

There I stood, holding her farewell hand,  
(Pressing my life and soul and all  
The world to one good-bye, till, small  
And smaller pressed, why there I'd stand  
Dead when they vanished with the sight of her).  
And I saw that she had grown aware,  
Queer puzzled face! of other things  
Beyond the present and her own young speed,  
Of yesterday and what new days might breed  
Monstrously when the future brings  
A charger with your late-lamented head:  
Aware of other people's lives and will,  
Aware, perhaps, aware even of me ...  
The joyous hope of it! But still  
I pitied her; for it was sad to see  
A goddess shorn of her divinity.  
In the midst of her speed she had made pause,  
And doubts with all their threat of claws,  
Outstripped till now by her unconsciousness,  
Had seized on her; she was proved mortal now.  
"Live, only live! For you were meant  
Never to know a thought's distress,  
But a long glad astonishment  
At the world's beauty and your own.  
The pity of you, goddess, grown  
Perplexed and mortal."  
Yet ... yet ... can it be  
That she is aware, perhaps, even of me?

And life recedes, recedes; the curve is bare,  
My handkerchief flutters blankly in the air;  
And the question rumbles in the void:  
Was she aware, was she after all aware?

The end