

TO A READER

Jeffrey Woodward

How is it with such ghostliness your hand
Distinguishes itself, there at the margin
No thought reserved, while the complicit eye
Steals presently across the written page?
Your skill is diligence, with icy hand;
These letters, yours, to spirit from the margin.
And though its roil is visible, the eye
Yet masters what it rifles from the page.

What is there, stranger, in tomorrow's turn
That so compels me to accept your hand
And wrinkle, by that pact, the finished page?
For it is your true genius yet to turn
White black, by paraphrase, and yours to hand
To Time's familiars this much savaged page.

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