

Ripple the Sky

1

barefaced

bewept

grave rain'd

pray you mark

crowflowers

nettles

daisies

long purples

there's rosemary

that's for surrender

and pansies

that's for thoughts

there's fennel for you

and columbines

and a daisy

and rue

I would give you violets

but they withered all away

a-down a-down down

an' you go a-down a-down

2

once

on a foreign street
the tears of many

I stumbled drunk among
mourners

the black-wrapped strangers put

their ears up to my skull
to eavesdrop on my ghosts

the whistling dead throughout me

trod on blue
and flowed through sand

I scolded my skull but

its strains ran colder and thinner

when I

looked up I found you in every fluttering veil

butterflies flickered

out of your mouth and flew toward mine

the Dead Leaf
the Red Admiral
the Western White
the Glass Wing
the Common Blue

the Painted Lady
the Purple Emperor
the Neglected Eighty-Eight

I caught one and
smudged its lavender dust across your eyelids

3

*white his shroud as the mountain's snow
larded with sweet flowers
which bewept to the grave did go
with true-love showers*

*he is dead and gone lady
he is dead and gone
at his head a grass-green turf
at his heels a stone*

when you broke into shards of song
I cut my lips to kiss you
as if drugged with sleep you chanted
you moaned and you ranted riddles

but now your vase unchatters
your body glistens bare above me
you fold me in your calming blue
you dissolve me in your wings of melted glass
my bowed head a stone at your feet
I think you now I drink you

only pray we never hear the mark
pray the soundings never nettle our thoughts
pray we never rise shrouded in nets

do you also hear a haunting

don't you also hear an 'ey non nonny

don't you also hear an 'ey

—Greg Alan Brownderville