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The Conspiracy in Your Smile

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The Conspiracy in Your Smile

By Caroline Clutterbuck

Your eyes are dark and damp and humid
like a dive into the marsh,
I come out heavy,
wet,
disoriented,
stinking of your stare.

In a deserted fairground, full of wind,
full of white, you appear,
surrounded by... by...

A beat pulses in my ear.

The murder of crows,
they're at your feet,
picking at your toes.
Some flutter and flock
to make a nest in your hair,
but you remain stoic,
standing there.
A bleach-stained dress.
Haunting cheekbones.
Your smile is a sneer.

There's something greater at work here;
you must mean something to me.
Even though I've solved your murder,
you are the darkest mystery.

I'll need to name you something,
to label, to contain.
I'll leave you, cramped, contorted.
I'll file you away.

How would you like to be
a symbol of conspiracy?

In the dream I had last night,
your nails scratched at the pavement
and when you could not crack the ground,
I awoke
to a silent house
and clean hands.