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Posted on 17 January 2019 By Alfred Hayes

This is a wrenching book which is a high compliment It s an unsparring examination of a doomed love affair in post WWII New York, from the perspective of a 40 year old man who is looking back on what he has lost, not with sentimentality, but with all the difficult emotions we have difficulty admitting to ourselves Anger, bitterness, resentment, self blame color his recollections The relationship he recalls is fraught with complications He was seeing a beautiful woman who longed for commitment and stability stability both in terms of her status in the relationship, but also in terms of material possessions Her lover eschews conventional commitments, questioning her priorities as he intellectualizes his own A wealthy man enters the woman s life, and proposes to pay her 1,000 in return for a night with her These flawed characters are all lost in some way, none able to fulfill the desires and needs of the other Hayes represents their conflicts and raw emotions with prose that moves from sheer beauty to breathtaking anger His is an economical style that took my breath away at times I can t remember the last time that I read a novel that conveyed fury with such intensity Throughout the novel, Hayes prose kept drawing me in He explores the anguish we hide behind a placid mask It was becoming painful to think There seemed to be inside me whole areas I had to be careful of I could feel my mind, like a paw, wince away from certain sharp recollections I contained, evidently, a number of wounded ideas So, with the only face I had, I continued to walk uptown, imitating a man who is out for some air or a little exercise before bed He finds words to convey some of the despair of being lost in

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nothingness Are you all right I asked She was all right Then what was it It was nothing it was just the ocean Because it s sad It wasn t sad, she said no, that wasn t it Sadness was the wrong word It was just the ocean, and the darkness, the great darkness, how it went on and on It was the being lost in it for a little while He portrays the savage inner monologues that help us to maintain a frozen state of righteous anger when battling with someone we love and lose So there would be the three of us, locked charmingly together, each in his necessary place He would play the role of the solid husband, with whom she felt safe she would be the wife, ornamental, lovely, who served the coffee to his friends and I would occupy the special niche she was suggesting It seemed to her so satisfactory a way out I should really have no objections It was so difficult for a woman to find everything she wanted neatly packaged into one man I was quite sure that she even thought of it as one of her rights Throughout, Hayes explores a kind of existential angst that imbued post war Western popular culture, a sense that we are all alone, that we cannot find meaningful connection with others Hayes first published *In Love* in 1953, and is now being reissued by NYRB Classics I have had some of my most memorable reading experiences of the past few years when reading books from that series, and I am happy to include *In Love* among those books I received an ARC of this book from Netgalley in return for an honest review. Most of us, fortunate enough to have been *In Love*, no doubt think of that time as one of joy, a discovery of that which completes us, maybe even a transcending passion If you ve been in love, you probably know you can t define it Not really You just know, or remember, that wonderful feeling And perhaps you ve fallen out of love Maybe you can t define that either But you know the difference *In Love* *Out of Love*. That s not what the author is talking about here when he talks about being *In Love*, but perhaps you might recognize this It s the kind of Love when the timing s not right, when circumstances might not allow it, when misunderstanding smirks. The narrator of this novella is an unnamed writer so it could be the author or, you know, it could be another unnamed writer There s an unnamed woman, so she too could be anyone They are lovers, but nothing the narrator says tells me they are *In Love* There may be an emotional disconnect, but the reader me isn t sure whose fault that is The narrator seems

Night

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The Zombie Room

The Hungry Wolves of Van Diemen's Land

Never Knowing

The Elephant Tree

Lock and Key

to lack the ability or desire to commit But, the woman The woman meets a wealthy man Who offers her 1,000 The woman says NO, then she says Yes, then she says No, then she says YES She tells all this to our narrator Who is still clueless, until he is not One ought at least to be discriminating about what one picked to be humiliated by. You will no doubt have guessed this spawned the movie Indecent Proposal The narrator acts badly, then acts nobly The woman acts badly, then badly, then almost nobly Of course, she could be honest about it, but it s late in the day, and I wouldn t say this is exactly the century to start being honest in. This was written in 1953, so not in our century, where truth abounds. There s almost no dialogue in this book, certainly no quotation marks But the couple have this exchange, late You think I m a whore, don t you Think So In Love, the author titles this And maybe I don t recognize this Love, and then maybe I do Love doesn t always fit, and sometimes chafes I know it s made me cry Maybe that s what the author means. Love, that misused, overabused idea, the tendrils of which coil around our everyday existence and refuse to loosen their collective tenacious grip The illusion of which is sold in glittery packages of puce and pink to the masses like Marx s opium in the form of songs, messages and merchandise wrapped up in artifice A full fledged day devoted to singing its praises every year and the carefully orchestrated alignment of our feelings with soulless consumerism Too much cynicism Perhaps Love bade me welcome yet my soul drew back, Guilty of dust and sin George Herbert On a sombre wintry Sunday afternoon, while browsing my kindle shelves I tapped the lovely NYRB cover image of In Love which had been lying ignored, buried under a burgeoning heap of newer additions and purchases Thank you Kris, for your beautiful review which caused me to request this on Netgalley A few pages into it, and my faith in humanity was restored partially with the realization that not all finer nuances of this emotion have been sacrificed on the altar of the virulently corporatized culture of our times. There s still poetry in living There s a strange kind of fulfillment even in grief and disenchantment There s Alfred Hayes and his pain soaked hymn to a doomed love affair And there are publishing houses like NYRB who are taking the initiative to republish buried works of genius in these distressing times of profit making

The Hidden Wound

Chronicle of a Death
Foretold

Blubber

When You Reach Me

The Ordinary Princess

frenzy Now she had passed into another life She inhabited a world from which I was excluded, and she had left me in an immense empty space Narrated by a man in his forties in conversation with a random young woman at a bar, this is essentially a tale serenading the transience of love and its undeniable link with the core of our being The interplay of feelings, words and gestures that a romantic relationship revolves around, the acute sense of everything else paling in comparison with the object of our affection, the unreality of the extent of our involvement with a person that descends on us once passion wanes Hayes dissects all these familiar and much talked about aspects of romantic love with a lyrical flair and with the wisdom and emotional depth of an author unwilling to shy away from depicting the entailing bitterness and despondency of heartbreak nothing we want ever turns out quite the way we want it, love or ambition or children, and we go from disappointment to disappointment, from hope to denial, from expectation to surrender, as we grow older, thinking or coming to think that what was wrong was the wanting, so intense it hurt us, and believing or coming to believe that hope was our mistake and expectation our error, and that everything the we want it the difficult the having it seems to belf not for the thoroughly original handling of a commonplace subject explored ever so often, read this for Hayes lucid, understated but veritably charming writing style. I really didn't have a good vice Liquor in moderate quantities Love on the installment plan Wouldn't it be nice if I could really cultivate some impressive vice Some excessive cruelty or some astonishing sacrifice But not even that Instead, we complain in small voices Complain we've married the wrong girl, taken the wrong job, lived the wrong life. And what pitiful attempts we make at cures we raise vegetables in ridiculous gardens, we apply for memberships in athletic clubs, we promise ourselves to read again all the important books we've neglected We think that what we want is a simpler life, and a active, a eternal one, and every Wednesday we diligently attend the square dances at the local schoolhouse imagining that a Virginia reel is the way back into a friendly community, and that denims and a checked shirt will restore communication with the stranger who lives next door. The only thing we haven't lost, I thought, is the ability to suffer We're fine at suffering But it's such a noiseless suffering

We never disturb the neighbors with it We collapse, but we collapse in the most disciplined way That s us That s certainly us The disciplined collapsers.Suicide quietly with sleeping pills in a tiled bath Neat gassings in a duplex No trouble to anyone the will notarized and the floor swept and the telephone on its hook.Your only vice, I thought, is yourself The worst of all The really incurable onechokengtitiktikchokeng62 Dry your eyes matel know it s hard to take but her mind has been made upThere s plenty fish in the seaDry your eyes matel know you want to make her see how much this pain hurtsBut you ve got to walk away nowIt s overThere s that phrase, a heartbreaking work of staggering genius, that should be used to refer to John Williams Stoner whenever it is mentioned, but with Alfred Hayes In Love I m starting to collect such similar works Whilst not on the same level as Stoner or Isherwood s Simple Man it still manages to speak to the psyche of the adult male damaged by a lifetime of loss I started to save quotes as I went but such was the frequency and the potency of the prose contained within this little novella of heartbreak that it just seemed like an exercise in futility trying to list them all, you may as well just read the brief and wonderful work for yourselfWe go from disappointment to disappointment, from hope to denial, from expectation to surrender, as we grow older, thinking or coming to think that what was wrong was the wanting, so intense it hurt us, and believing or coming to believe that hope was our mistake and expectation our error, and that everything the we want it the difficult the having it seems to be I found myself amazed at how perfectly Hayes captured my own feelings in the wake of another disastrous relationship denouement, the way he effortlessly seems to repeatedly capture the ache of heart and head in the romantic male, reflecting the dislocation from life that we tend to feel One line in a novel would be delightful, but he just doesn t stop from first to last, it s almost overwhelmingly sad, especially when it causes you to reflect on your own failings as a lover and the potential life that continues to be led by those you once loved If only I could write of my emotions with such clarity and efficiency, I might have been a rock star afterallShe inhabited a world from which I was excluded, and she had left me in an immense empty spaceIn wrapping up his introduction to the Peter Owen edition Frederic Raphael states Hayes may have

been forgotten if he was ever remembered , but he belongs to a serene company of petits maitres whose exquisite work, however sparse, need not await the endorsement of critics That being said, hopefully the reissue by NYRB will be just enough endorsement for a new generation of fans to discover this work as they did John Williams in 2013. Alfred Hayes colabor con directores de cine tan destacados como Roberto Rossellini o Vittorio de Sica disfrutando de cierta fama y reconocimiento en los años 50 Tras décadas de olvido, lo recuper recientemente The New York Review of Books y yo he tenido que leer la novela en la edición argentina La bestia equiterra pues nadie publica a Hayes en España La traducción tiene algunos, no demasiados, modismos argentinos que para un español puede chocar un poco en la voz de personajes neoyorquinos Pero ni eso ni el machismo, y hasta la misoginia, que se percibe en algunos momentos estamos en el New York de Mad men han impedido que disfrute mucho de esta historia sobre una ruptura sentimental Argumentalmente, la novela no es nada del otro mundo, algo banal en esencia en un bar, un escritor en horas bajas le cuenta a una desconocida su historia de amor y desamor con una bella bailarina sin talento Sin embargo, el resultado no puede ser más brillante Toda la novela, todo su valor, todo su interés descansa en la voz que narra y en lo que esta voz comunica El relato está escrito desde una muy habil tercera persona que generosamente cede todo el protagonismo al personaje masculino en un monólogo todo desolación y tristeza Algo como esto perdonad las numerosas citas pero no puedo resistir a la tentación de compartirlas con vosotros Los enamorados es de esos libros en los que se subraya casi cada frase Sirvan todas ellas, además de para facilitarme la labor y satisfacer mi capricho, como ejemplo del estiloS , dijo el hombre, con frecuencia me pregunto por qué doy la impresión de ser una persona muy triste aunque me empeño en que no estoy triste, en que se equivocan pero cuando me miro en el espejo resulta que es cierto, mi cara está triste, mi cara está realmente triste, y me doy cuenta y le sonrío a la chica, porque eran las cuatro y el día menguaba y ella era muy bonita, de a poco se había vuelto cada vez más bonita, lo cual era muy sorprendente de que después de todo tienen razón, estoy triste, más triste de lo que yo mismo soy Empezó a contarle su historial, un hombre desilusionado sino solo lo

contrario de ilusionado que simplemente buscaba un poco de placer sin siquiera un poco de culpa, un idilio muy conveniente, fijo e invariable, una simple secuencia de placeres que no alterar seriamente mi vida ni se interpondría con mi trabajo, que llenar a las horas de mis largas tardes y me liberar a de la presión de la soledad para darme lo que, creo, consideraba la diversión más agradable de todo el parque de diversiones el placer del amor Ella, o la visión que él nos ofrece de ella, siendo bienpensantes, precisaba de un hombre que la necesitara, alguien capaz de colgarse si lo dejaba, pero que pensando algo menos bien, era una mujer que, por ser hermosa esperaba las recompensas que trae la belleza, por lo menos algunas no se era hermosa en vano en un mundo que insistía en que lo más importante para una chica era ser hermosa Tampoco pedía mucho, un cocker spaniel, la habitación infantil con el empapelado de botecitos y peces voladores, el jardín con regadores automáticos y alguien que le lavara los platos. Una relación equivocada entre personas equivocadas en la que irrumpe una proposición indecente Todo el análisis pormenorizados de los porqués, de los cómo, todo el teje maneje mental con el que se castiga nuestro enamorado, con el que intenta defenderse, con el que justifica su humillación, su crueldad, su derrota, todos los resquicios de sí mismo que acaba descubriendo y transitando, todo ello es lo que hace especial este libro todo eso y el irresistible atractivo del fracaso Lo único que puede salvarnos es una gran caída Eso de quedarse ahí arriba en la cuerda floja, haciendo equilibrio con una sombrilla insignificante y contentándonos con darle miedo a la audiencia, es lo que nos consume No estás de acuerdo Una gran caída, eso es lo que necesitamos I may never comeback to this same feeling that my desire is pressing but I want to talk about how it feels to be held so hard that your body is worthless I want to talk about all that happens inside me that I can't see Gale Thompson From the very beginning this novel elicited strong emotions in me For the most part, they weren't complimentary There were times during the first 60 or so pages I wanted to toss the book out the window I didn't know at that stage that the man, asking a woman in a bar if he appeared to be a man, was going to be anything other than a fool It took falling from a great height to make him a man, or the ghost of one The how and why of it proved to be pretty darn revelatory

The relationship between the narrator and his lover, born of convenience and comfort devolves with an awful momentum. We learn so much about her cluttered, fixed life and know what it is she wants, which is not in his wheelhouse his amusement park of pleasure. The strength of this novel is the author's controlled, evocative prose and the sharp lens he employs to examine the breakdown of this relationship. The last three chapters are gorgeous, moving and vicious. I remember thinking anything could happen. Something awful would happen and it would be a triumph, a relief. Something violent. Though it is not right to, removing love from the equation makes this novel easier to understand. It is least of all about love. It's about all the noise and distortion being taken from us, fighting the loss, denying its existence and departure, it's about what is left over. It is about all that happens inside that cannot be seen. I wondered what it would be like if finally we understood everything I had experienced something like the feeling the dark ocean had given me, a feeling that came when one was just on the point of falling asleep, and how in the morning you had a feeling that the night before you had really and finally understood something. But evidently it was too difficult a thing for the mind to hold or keep, and we always fell asleep just where the knowledge we were about to acquire became dangerous to us. Highly recommend.

New York In The S A Man On A Barstool Is Telling A Story About A Woman He Met In A Bar, Early Married And Soon Divorced, Her Child Farmed Out To Her Parents, Good Looking, If A Little Past Her Prime They D Gone Out, They D Grown Close, But As Far As He Was Concerned It Didn T Add Up To Much He Was A Busy Man Then One Day, Out Dancing, She Runs Into A Rich Awkward Lovelorn Businessman He LI Pay For Her To Be His, Pay Her A Lot And Now The Narrator Discovers That He Is As Much In Love With Her As She Is With Him, Perhaps , Though It Will Take Him A While To Realize Just How Utterly Lost He Is Executed With The Cool Smoky Brilliance Of A Classic Miles Davis Track, In Love Is An Unequaled Exploration Of The Tethered And Untethered Heart We need, in love, to practice only this letting each other go. For holding on comes easily we do not need to learn it. Rainer Maria Rilke has been a long time since I have written a review on here, and for that matter a long time since I have really read a book cover to cover

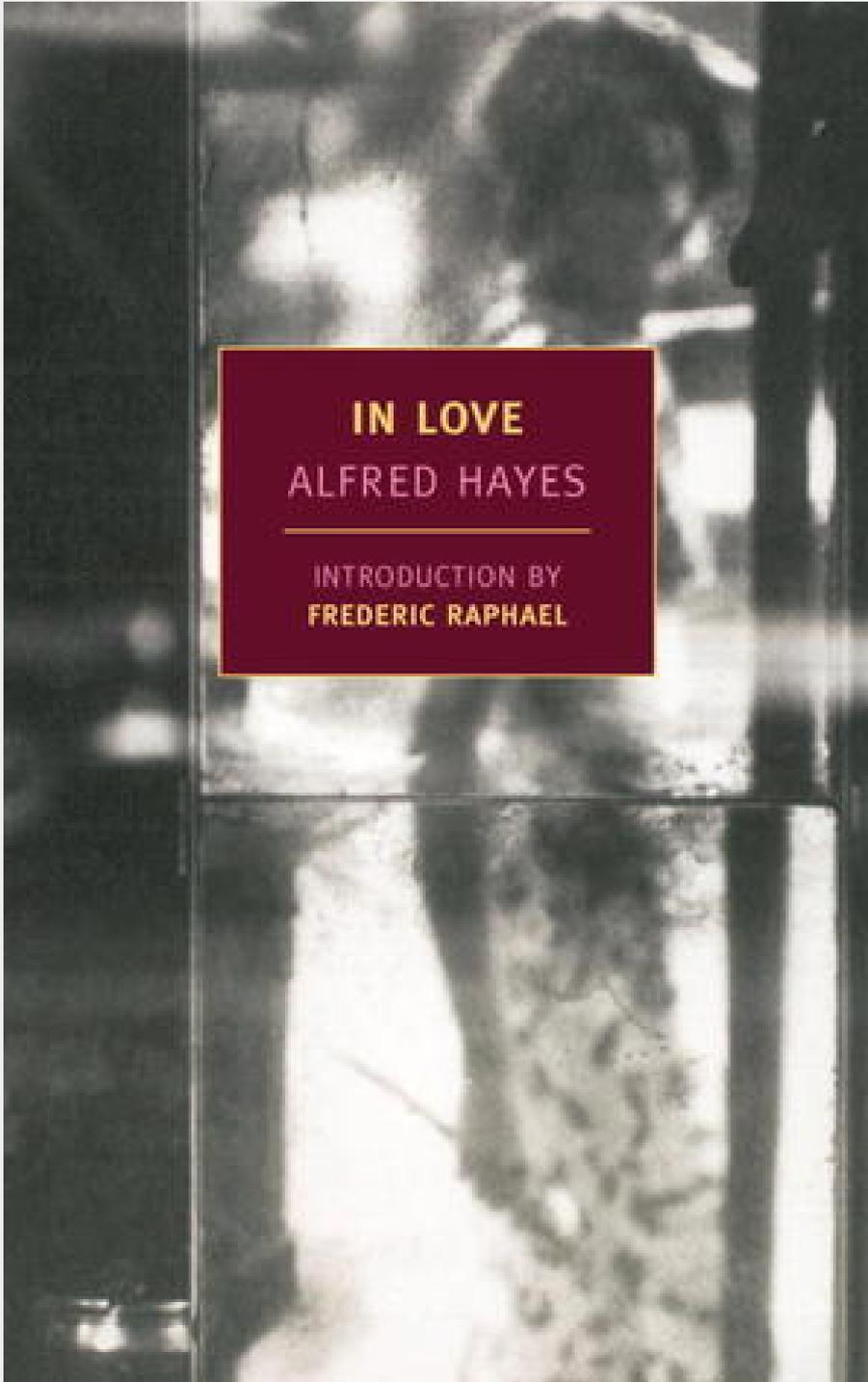
November was, and December is now, a bit of the doldrums for my reading. Something about the cold, grey sky and the gawky black skeletons of trees, my little crackling lungs letting out clouds of breath something about the winter settles into my bones and it's a sort of depression of my body. I don't do what I love to do. I sit and sip tea, and go to bed. I write a lot of bad sentences. My brain isn't frozen but it becomes slack and lazy.

Alfred Hayes *In Love* marked a temporary break in this mental slackness for me. It was a rapid read, I was roped up and held bound to it, despite its brevity and ambiguity, it is an incredibly powerful novel. Written and published in the years following the second World War, when the United States was enjoying a period of economic dynamism and success was flourishing, money became the currency of social interaction. This book asks what is love worth in the most coldly economic terms. This monetary quantification of the heart is made explicitly manifest throughout the novel, but like all things money can buy, it exists very close to the surface. The heart of the novel is about desire, what do we want why do we want it. Money is a red herring. Oftentimes in the novel, the glitz and glimmer of money and success distract us readers, and the narrator distracts us with it, perhaps fools his own heart with it, for much of the narrative. Something about love has to transcend the material world, the realm of monied success, of investments and properties, of nights out and thousand dollar solicitations. It sounds trite to say so, that love transcends. We think often of the rags to riches stories in the literary canon. *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, even Proust's affair with Albertine is a cross-pollination among classes. We may ask why the wealthier party condescends beneath his class, but implicitly we must also wonder what the attraction is for the lesser party. Is the promise of wealth and stability factored in to the concept of love. The unnamed object of the narrator's love in *In Love* must choose what money and love are worth to her. But we are given a skewed view of her choice. Our narrator does not quite love her until she is gone from him, and Howard truly seems to care for her, at least for something about her. The question of love for our heroine is less her love for either of these men, but rather the maternal love for her absent child. She doesn't want for money for herself, but for her child, she ponders if her gold-greedy hands can be washed clean in the Phrygian waters of

her pure motives She suffers for her child, and her love for her is the only truly moving love in the novel, the rest are simply the yearning for touch. As Beckett explains in his essay on Proust, our desires, our passions, fluctuate and change, not because we perceive a change in the object, but rather because we are an ever changing subject constantly reformed, new faces freshly painted and hanging on the walls of our lives infinite corridors, always a new man When the impossibility of the unnamed woman becomes apparent, when her break is affected, the narrator's desire for her is piqued, we want what we cannot have His possession of her dulled his desires, let them roam errant across the city Her absence does not awaken in him a newfound appreciation for her, but rather a void which demands filling by someone, she becomes a silhouette invested with his aimless desires for something which he lacks He indulges in his suffering, which is half poison and half remedy, by seeking on the surface what he cannot have He is never happy, not when he possesses her, not when he loses her, he is a servant to his own sense of suffering We all are addicted to suffering sometimes, that powerful feeling of loss, even if what we lose is unimportant, a trifle, we mourn the change in ourselves, the reminder of our missing something But the release of suffering, it is an escape from the horror of routine, the hideous monster of Habit, it is an escape from time and the tortures of what we allow our lives to become out of complaisance and distraction We find solace in our own pain, and the narrator identifies his pain with the loss of the woman, though he ultimately has lost something which mattered very little to him She has become the allegory for his life's failures and disappointments She is invested not only with his failures in love, his loss of romance and of human touch, but also of his meager professional accomplishments He never meets Howard, he hears about him only in relation to the girl, he becomes a part of her, a Janal face prim and upright, attached to her, transforming the two into a true monstrosity But her break from him does not console him, because he doesn't want her. The failed trip to Atlantic City, the perfunctory congress in the small motel bed, the silent drive home, send a shudder through the cozy suffering of the narrator, he can no longer embody his suffering in her, he can only feel for her a flash of hatred and an ocean of indifference The only thing we

haven't lost, I thought, is the ability to suffer. We're fine at suffering. But it's such a noiseless suffering. We never disturb the neighbors with it. We collapse, but we collapse in the most disciplined way. That's us. That's certainly us. The disciplined collapsers. We are silent sufferers, disciplined collapsers. We envision our pain always as individual, as unique, no one could understand the tremolo of our sufferings: its waxes and wanes, the crescendo, the syncopes, and the declension, the falling apart. We feel alone, us sufferers, but it is not the painful loneliness in the dark, but rather a self-indulgent aloneness of genius. When we suffer we feel that our hearts transcend words, language, that our suffering is a language of self-communion alone. We are the kings and queens of our desolate castles of suffering, our vast empty empires. To realize the universality of our suffering is to tear down the walls, to burn the throne and surrender our thorny crowns. We find solace only in the solitary discipline of collapse, not in the siege of communion. Loss is not the opposite of love, it is its sister, and they travel together always. Loss feeds love with desire, we want what we feel we have lost, or have lost before even beginning the chase. The only true paradise in the paradise lost we don't love our Edens until we are thrown out of them, and Eden has no price of admission. In this short but powerful novella, British author Alfred Hayes paints a beautiful portrait on love and loss while holding up a mirror, making us question what it really means to feel.

The only thing we haven't lost, I thought, is the ability to suffer. We're fine at suffering. But it's such a noiseless suffering. We never disturb the neighbours with it. We collapse, but we collapse in the most disciplined way. That's us. That's certainly us. The disciplined collapsers. I rather think though it's the acrobat, as in my dream, with the dangerous, vanity-driven, and meaningless life, who's most like us. At least it seems to me that paltry costume, that pride because the tricks accomplished and once again he hasn't fallen. The whole point is that nothing can save us but a good fall. It's saying up there on the wire, balancing ourselves with that tribal parasol and being so pleased with terrifying an audience, that's finishing up. Don't you agree? A great fall, that's what we all need.



IN LOVE
ALFRED HAYES

INTRODUCTION BY
FREDERIC RAPHAEL