

ELEGY FOR SALLY CAREY*

She was of rarefied ether and timeless
Her elegant clockwork in antique splendor tallied
axioms one by one
And they summed up admirably.
But she lived too close to the engine,
And it irritated each cell of her body.
At home with the dusty wooden tables,
The jars and charts in Latin, the brittle chalk-
boards.
At home in another century,
When men were a little less sane
Had penetrating eyes,
She walked in hallways as if she'd built them
Shoulders rounded before their time.

You never saw the deep greenness of a leaf,
Nor felt its weight except with her.
In her company a tree displayed every limb, each
part—
Though the summer went on for all that.

One night I caught her swinging by her hands in
the starlight,
High above the ground, alone.
A halo clung to her form, thin and fuzzy

(She wore New England like a cloak, like a scent
And the river flowed to her pulse).
Still she was, like the rest of us, mud and electricity.
We do at times become abstract;
Time and distance make us circumspect,
Detached.

For secret as freedom, in some quiet corner,
Beyond the mirrored reflection to the watchful eye,
A cell changed coats,
And her being succumbed to the trivial deception.
Deprived her of wisdom, passion, and her parcel of
years.

So now it is spring again,
The age-old repetitive sobriety
Of which we all speak so highly,
But she will not return,
Barely had time to leave her imprint
On this idiot world
Where windup birds sing,
And crocuses highlight the flower show Astro Turf.
Where she is, may no storms come
And no more foolish springtimes full of cruel hope.

—Alan Cohen, MD

*Sally Carey died at 21-years-old, of breast cancer at
Vassar College in 1973.