

The Rake  
Tristram Fane Saunders

# the poetry business

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## *The Rake Takes His Time*

(from you, reader you'll hardly feel it, but

you'll feel it a page

is not a one-way mirror

that papercut was not a papercut)

## *The Rake Invites You to the Weepies*

Don't be lugubrious, my newest friend.  
Bite lugubrious. Roll it around,  
and roll around in it. Take a dive  
in its lubricious, bleak lagoon, lukewarm  
and wallowsome. Drink deep and swoon – the salt  
will lift you like a vast and sudden futon,  
a waterbed, luxurious and soft  
and overfed, the kind they advertise

in why-oh-widescreen at the multiplex.  
The eyeless ushers mutter *unless unless*  
– shush. The trailers are my favourite bit.  
It's dark in here. Can you remember where  
we wandered in from? Good. Forget about it  
while I brush this popcorn from your hair.

## *The Rake Would Like You*

in a moment, but not yet, to pour  
yourself out of that little peignoir  
and into the wet. The feet,  
you will notice, are clawed,  
a word which once  
meant flattered.  
It referred  
to when what soothes is sharp  
– *my back or yours?* –  
to days when a  
soft soap approach  
would scarcely scratch  
the surface, but to scratch  
beneath the lather, lover,  
to scrape, to lathe,  
would bring relief, brimful and hot and as  
we've time to kill, duckie,  
isn't it funny  
how we find our own terms for the act 'to fill'?  
(The taps become  
a pair of snubnosed guns, a duel,  
my hand on hot and yours on cool.)  
How I 'draw', partner, and you 'run'?

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This pamphlet is for Lucia Morello.