

## AMSTERDAM

I took my daughter out for a stroll,  
Her, not yet two;  
Me, thirty-six, naïve, unworldly.

We turned down an empty side street,  
with little to see,  
An infrequent storefront,  
Faded facades,  
Drab in the damp Autumn air.

A curious sight caught my eye.  
I stopped. Crossed the street. An art dealer, I assumed.  
A large picture window  
Framing a near-naked woman  
Seated in a red velvet chair,  
Empire Era?,  
A leather-bound book in her hands.

Italian? French, perhaps?  
One of those nudes,  
So calm,  
So sensual,  
Dark hair and eyes lost in those leather-bound words,  
The white of her skin, outlined in drapery,  
The chair covering,  
The black gauze of her robe, a loose-fitting gown, flung open,  
Revealing the fullness of her femininity,  
All come to rest on a richly-hued rug of the ancient Orient.

The scene so stood out from the façade,  
Itself framed by the drab visuals all around,  
It mesmerized.  
I stood, what seemed like hours, moments only, I'm sure,  
My daughter and me,  
Staring, examining, imagining ...

Then she uncrossed and re-crossed her legs,  
And I, red with shock and embarrassment,  
Hurried, ran, flew off, on my way ...  
To the more sobering work of the anti-nuclear protest in the Dam Square.

*[long pause]*

I remember little of the protest ... but I'll never forget that Lady in the Window.