THE HOUSE OF MIRTH

FOR LUKE, MY TIGER

JENNIFER C. CORMACK

This is the House of Mirth.

This is the boy
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This the waiting time
of the eager boy
that dances in the House of Mirth.

These are the days
that mark the time
of the hope-filled boy
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the night
that crowns the day
drumming the time
of the patient boy
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the owl
that flies in the night
but sleeps by day
roosting the time
of the playful boy
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the lowcountry oak
where the owl perches
yearning to feed in the night
until the glow of day
sweeps the time
of the handsome boy
that dances in the House of Mirth.

These are the old rice fields
not far from the old live oak
where the owl hides
released by the silent night
to forage away from the day
flooded by time
of the college boy  
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the graceful girl on the hillside bench  
overlooking the old rice fields  
near the Spanish moss that hangs in the oak  
of the monogamous owl  
that lives for the night  
concealed by the day  
to bide the time  
of the imaginative boy  
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the garden  
where the pretty girl rests on the weathered bench  
close to the lush rice fields  
that sing to the coastal oak  
whose ghostly owl  
lurks through the night  
of the locked-out day  
to measure the time  
of the smitten boy  
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the colorful duck  
that breeds in the garden  
where the clever girl rises from the bench  
to search the rice fields  
for the centennial oak  
where the nocturnal owl  
plays in the night  
quarantined by day  
with the sped-up time  
of the boy turned man  
that dances in the House of Mirth.

This is the blackwater river  
where the wood duck migrates  
to live and nest near the verdurous garden  
hidden from the grownup girl in front of the bench  
as she leaves the rice fields  
down the lowcountry trail to the sturdy oak  
whose secret owl  
with low-light vision calls in the night  
since it’s stricken by day  
to countdown the time  
of the happy boy-man  
that dances in the House of Mirth.