

Katie Fisher – Grandmother's Veil

Together through five kids, nine moves, all the drippy green headcolds, the overcooked waffles and double bed slumbers, she loved him blindly. They met as sophomores.

But early on she learned to recognize a look of panic that flickered in his eyes and meant I can't. Then he fled to the cellar, and no indigo glitter of daughter's eyes or warm, nutmeg-scented cookie could rouse him. For hours, for days, the drumming of his hammer shook the joists and vexed their nerves upstairs, until finally he rose with another birdhouse, or a supernumerary coldframe for her early tomatoes. Other wives, deranged by the racket, might erupt in bickering or begin to court cankers. She sank into placidness.

Sometimes, while soothing a baby's squalls or hunkered into cottony midnight quiet, or lost in a dishwater reverie, she recalled the chilly church steps and the sudden blast that billowed her ivory gown and sent the lacy veil swirling round his head. How could the champagne-happy nuptial guests help but laugh at the faceless groom, all hat and spats? They did not sense his dread of being trapped, robbed of breath and sight. But a bride might. And all those years she suffered so for smiling while the shutter snapped.