

FRANK SALVIDIO

*MÉNAGE À TROIS*1. *HER FOOL*

A fool, I loved you at first sight, although
 I knew you terminally married from
 The start to one I must admire, one who
 Feared not that anyone could take you from
 His side. And still I fashion my rough rhymes
 And wait upon you patiently when he
 Is not at hand, to celebrate past times
 I knew you were doomed and present days I see
 Must end. Why do I linger at the last
 To contemplate my borrowed life with you—
 Still married to a half-forbidden past
 That was as false to me as I was true?
 There is no other course that I can choose,
 Because, in some sad way, you are my Muse.

2. *FALSE AND FAIR*

O False and Fair: false to him, false to me,
 Betrothed to both—to one in law, in mind
 The other, none in heart. We are three
 Who live as two, as you are so inclined
 To us—vain men who weary ourselves out
 To serve you, each to share you in his turn
 As you determine—keeping both in doubt
 To whom, or when or if you will return.
 And so you trade us, with your distant smile,
 And think, perhaps, that you are true to each
 One on his turn, content with both, the while
 We struggle for a heart no heart can reach.
 And thus the hasting years have hurried by,
 And still we serve you, and do not know why.

3. *CANTO V*

You said, "If Dante has his way, I will
 Be in the storming winds of Canto V—
 Eternally deprived, wild voices shrill
 With fear around me—dead, yet still alive
 In unfulfilled desire, regret, and pain
 Of longing, tormented by the sight
 Of what can never be for me again,"
 Then asked if I would share your endless night.
 Alas! There is no need for me to die
 To know that pain. I see you close at hand
 Yet unattainable, and know that I
 Have been condemned not by the dread command
 Of his avenging God, but you: there is
 No further need to die to suffer this.