

Shooting Cloud at a Sky

after Charles H Bebb, architect, & uncle three times great

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In a political economy of love, the arrival of children was often associated with the loss of a flatterer's affection & eventual disappearance of happiness. Of course, there came mistresses – there was always some actress, Danish princess or the errant wife of a Lord. After the quickening, you were left with a scrap & the makings of a boy out of opera, smog & tonic wine. Who knew he'd weave all that into hotels, opera houses & a love for large cities? I've a cartoon of him that you mightn't have seen – face like his father's, sac of architecture slung low over the right hip, rifle in his hands. It shows him shooting cloud at a sky teeming with birdly houses (I suppose it's a play on the clay pigeon, a reference to the ceasing of his passion for terra cotta ornament). Those miniature brick buildings on wing, only little angels he would ever have. I recognise this germ of you residing in him was also remaindered in me.

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Well yes I loved, & from those I loved I ran, I ran first, I ran early. Thought I could outwit rejection as if it might pass by me like a sniper while I hid under the desk in a schoolroom. To all of the physical walls that contained me, all the windows I had modified into doors so as to manoeuvre my unplanned escape from wherever I stood. To all the empty sacs, reversible cartilage, resorption of three hundred soft bones, & shrinking tails of incipients that never were. Forgive me.