

"Green Light"

by Kenneth Fearing

Bought at the drug store, very cheap; and later pawned.
After a while, heard on the street; seen in the park.
Familiar, but not quite recognized.
Followed and taken home and slept with.
Traded or sold. Or lost.

Bought again at the corner drug store,
At the green light, at the patient's demand, at nine o'clock.
Re-read and memorized and re-wound.
Found unsuitable.
Smashed, put together, and pawned.

Heard on the street, seen in a dream, heard in the park, seen
by the light of day;
Carefully observed one night by a secret agent of the Greek
Hydraulic Mining Commission, in plain clothes, off
duty.
The agent, in broken English, took copious notes. Which he
lost.
Strange, and yet not extraordinary.
Sad, but true.

True, or exaggerated, or true;
As it is true that the people laugh and the sparrows fly;
As it is exaggerated that the people change, and the sea stays;
As it is that the people go;
As the lights go on and it is night and it is serious, and just
the same;
As some one dies and it is serious, and the same;
As a girl knows and it is small, and true;
As the corner hardware clerk might know and it is true, and
pointless;
As an old man knows and it is grotesque, but true;
As the people laugh, as the people think, as the people
change,
It is serious and the same, exaggerated or true.

Bought at the drug store down the street
Where the wind blows and the motors go by and it is always
night, or day;
Bought to use as a last resort,
Bought to impress the statuary in the park.
Bought at a cut rate, at the green light, at nine o'clock.
Borrowed or bought. To look well. To ennoble. To prevent
disease. To entertain. To have.

Broken or sold. Or given away. Or used and forgotten. Or
lost.