

*James Matthew Wilson*

## **Self-Possession**

This girl in heels walks by a mirror  
And stops to sweep hair from her shoulder,  
Then turns and goes, as if she were  
Destined to be her own beholder  
And that glass in the hall put there  
For no one else, its frame growing older  
Deprived and emptied of the face  
Whose visitation was its grace.

With the firm setting of his jaw,  
And straightened back, the young man steels  
Himself against the threat of awe  
To loose his flabby soul and peel  
Away composure, lest some raw  
Sensation rob him of what's real.  
Thus armed and solid, he'd appear  
To her whose beauty wanders near.

Others may call it all deceit:  
The confident body, air of grace,  
The mannered greeting, swift retreat  
Of hands, the raised repose of face;  
Those frail and viscous hearts that greet  
The world lie hidden as in a case,  
Losing what life they seek to gain  
Immured from all such honest pain.

But, heart, who lies within such dark,  
And strives to beat in measured tune,  
You lend the decent form its spark  
While it sustains you when you swoon,  
And gives thought's flight its well-aimed arc,  
Inscribes what from sense fades too soon,  
So truth my not die in the ear  
But, suitably disguised, appear.