

& for a moment I saw myself in you

Karen Jastermsky

(for Greta Garbo)

Your face (the kind of face that comes along once
in a hundred years) stares out from the bookstore

window, all 36 copies, the charcoal sketch:
the Camille lashes, kiss-me-now eyes,

that Ninotchka nose, the I-want-to-be-alone lips.
It's you tempting me to hold your life

in my hands, tempting me to remember
your face because you know I will

& I know it's you arranging the scene:
this bakery, & below the sign, FINE PASTRIES,

three teenage girls sit. It's you reminding me
I'm no longer fine pastry. Every Chinese

woman on Pell Street, the flame juggler
in Washington Square Park, the Little Italy

mother who leans out of an opened window,
wears your charcoal-sketched face.

When I'm crossing Broadway, your face on the cover
of PEOPLE magazine stares up at me from a corner

trash can & tempts my hand to exhume you the way
you did me--remember? When I saw you with John

Barrymore in your bedroom, you chopped my breath
in half, revived me--me, who wanted to be you,

alone--alone at 3 a.m. Saturday morning, stretched
out on the couch, with all lights off (the only

way to watch GRAND HOTEL). Remember?
& I saw, a moment, in you: myself.