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# The Costume: New and Selected Poems

Thomas L. Johnson

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## The Sign of the Mona Lisa Motel, Fallen at Camden

The signs are everywhere—the signs  
of love, the signs of fall. She lies,  
for instance, in a ditch near town,  
prostrate on the ground and decked out  
only in that revolutionary  
smile of hers: the sad sweet grin  
which bids a man to leave it all  
for her and enter into battle.  
I don't need to spend a little  
time where Merrie Englande passed  
a losing day. I want to throw it  
all away—the day, the year,  
a lifetime—putting back that face  
and staying where two lips and eyes  
like those gaze out at me and speak  
in loving silence, or in words.

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