

Yellow Milkmaid Syndrome

During a survey the Rijksmuseum discovered that there were over 10,000 copies of [Vermeer's 'The Milkmaid'] on the internet - mostly poor, yellowish reproductions. ... This was the trigger for us to put high-resolution images of the original work with open metadata on the web ourselves. Opening up our data is our best defence against the "yellow Milkmaid."

Verwayen et al, *Europeana Whitepaper*, No. 2

*There she is, intent, in all the right ways,
 in her yellows, blues, and browns.
 The milk she pours is true, runs white-to-creamy
 -bright from your morning window, runs steady
 in light the liquid flows
 These days, she's coming quite the all-familiar
 to homing sight,
 proving ever ever-present, all correct, and quite
 quite full, in-all,
 and lost
 in her every every cool, her concentrated colours*

I.

Now, look up here – up here – and how, so soon, your soapy
search-search histories will trick, will trick 'n' hook, and ring.

See how, in finely filed and quite distinct derivatives, she comes
along, quick to the digital, freefloats from th' engine-room rollers

still filmy slick from such thin transit – her luminance, her liquid –
and, wrung-out, ranked on scroll, she run-runs the resale shelving.

Like this – tweaked on the tubes – like this – she seems to beam and
beam along your O-so-lovely low E-deltas, O cool in the cathodes.

But yet, she looks so different now – and different now – from
how she was, or even how she is, or as she deftly claims to be.

And all the top, these so-so hotly high-tipped hits betray, that
she's – truth to tell – no longer quite the fixed, the constant type,

and that – hand to heart – she must confess some sleight or slop,
some dot-pitch slip; to pigment clip;

admit some tonal shift;

to

pinked tints in her pigment hues; to infinite shocks of diode drift

in burst in brilliant blue;

to vivid variation:

to

soft shuffles in Triple-O, irresolute.

II.

“People simply didn’t
believe
that the postcards
in our shop
were showing
the original.”

Metadata should be seen
as advertisement
for content. As opportune.

And although potential loss
of phantom income
should be seen
as very real,

we don’t
necessarily
want to make money
ourselves, but

for fear of loss

for very real

for real –
the very sake of us –

we do need
some on-tick faith-potential,
be it
in the post or simply touched to plastic

– *so send*

so send me back, invested, and

send me back invested –

among the
for fear of loss
this, this all
of metadata

The Best Defence against desire-jaundice
cultured in our scripting is
better data, till we credit it,
and open out
around the original wound.

III.

Don't these, the very best returned results, just seem
 so keenly smart in their high-fat saturates? So
 honest and so ever-so: safe as crystal-clean keep-sakes.

How they ply impressive claims as no-fade photographics:
 how they play and play, and lay and lie, and make
 pretend as most ideal immaculates.

No mis-tones in the neat neat colour-coding here,
 they say; all fixed, pinned in the pixel picked, and then
 when wet to touch, as lawful as our art and apple-eating.

O yes at 16:10 don't they then just rush so
 red-red hot around a living-capture? at 16:9,
 an amber line adjusts towards a warm-ish orange blush,

out in the wash and dying, down to
 an almost-burning umber loss: 4 to 3, burnt-out, 4 to 3,
 by the very life of it.

You see the hex triplet shift, how bright hues lift lift
 in the backlight, as the bytes down
 on her stiff-laced bodice bend, bow from the original orpiment

as the copy copy of her chroma-Form LightYellow turns and folds
 LemonChiffon, turns
 PapayaWhip, or Moccasin: finds

Khaki

in the Gold.

IV.

"I am, I am *In loving memory of*; I am in place of;
 in spite of;
 I'm in among the fond smears of thin-licked Vaseline;

in glorious salty hyper-colour,
 Epsom style;
 in licked thin gelatine.

and yes, I'm digging down in the deep jammy aspic,
 immemorial, preserving it all
 erroneously in its own odd terms."

V.

“These days,” is it so important that you really *see* what stuff
 her impassion is made of, to allow it how it matters?
 Does it really tell to tell – from her first inventions,
 right through the dead-layers,
 till we’re strict to the touch-up –
 the hard account of her?

After all, this girl, in apron strings, is hardly azurite; but
 is amazing
 ultramarine, in rare quantities, crushed from *lapis lazuli*.
 Might there then be something there, some thing or other
 in the knowing-that,
 in absolute acute appreciative accountancy?

I know some things: that something sculptural forms
 among impasto
 in the inclined invert of her face and forehead,
 which sits – impassive as any – beneath the weight
 of acid flake
 and warm mass-tone fold of lead-white linen: cerussite

skimmed from the reamy ferment coils,
 baked
 by tanner’s bark, is
 lifted
 clear
 from the boiled carbonics, clean to a spooling dazzle.

I know that shadow traces, grey-caked on the raw base layer are
 laced with charcoal,
 black-to-the-bone; that madder lips the greenish gray,
 built-up from the dead-colours in the cheap green earth
 unblended; that
 red sits by the whitened dab, tucked in to indigo.

I don’t know if it matters much, or massively, to know
 that carmine fades; that there is
 arsenic in her yellows; an old worm in her red lead.
 Of course, the milk she poured was only ever
 due to curdle, skimmed
 from the absolute truth – but still

the brown bread – though thinly sliced – can
 cut up well across
 the wholegrain and synthetic substitutes, and bite
 and bite just as memories hold
 on wonted place, and often come
 to fill it: with postcards of you, tending to sheer yellow

*and yet, taut to the saturate,
lost to the steady steady,
she frames at one too many moves, at many more,*

*one step away inside the kitchen door, beyond the lintel,
and so tight to her task, she stays
still still*

*and is stayed, distinct in this instant's tincture,
each all entire to her own, intact among specific shades,
situated by a thousand shadows, of jug, breadboard, and mullion*

*brown jug, brown breadboard, brown mullion,
brown jug brown bread
each seed a point to loaded point brown mullion and cupids at her feet*