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Painted Dragons

By CRISTEL HASTINGS

Who knows what mirth lays bare your gilded fangs—
What secrets hide beneath the robe that hangs,
A background for your painted, grinning head?
No wonder all the little dreams have fled!

Who knows what thoughts light fires in your eyes,
While chow dogs howl their grievance to the skies—
And what becomes of tapers in the night
When only you and Buddha watch their light?

Who knows why streets are narrow, twisted things—
Is it because you drag your finny wings
In furtive places, prying here and there?—
And is that why you grin—and stare—and stare?