

VIEWING MAGRITTE'S "THE LOVERS"

I recognize that man on the canvas,
the one with the swaddled head, all features
covered. The arrangement of his drapery
is a bit too debonaire for a Halloween mummy.
Not a bed sheet, more like an Arab pate piece
gone hyperbolic. For all the elegance
of his wrapping, his collar is a disaster.

His kissing partner is carelessly swathed
in her anonymity. Almost an afterthought
she tossed on. Or did he?

Is it starlit assignation?
Thinking if they're spotted,
who would be so gauche as to pull off
their masks? Some suspicious spouses might.
Or it might be convenient in other ways.
Either could slip in a surrogate
and be elsewhere kissing
without muzzy curtains between their lips.

More likely they share strangeness
tearing intimacy in strips
to bind stings unhealed enough to be seen.

--Glenna Holloway