

Martin Robertson

Block 21

The huge reflector of the hanging light
repeated the repeated, the unique scene,
canopied the still trolley, trundled in
with girl or boy. Boy or girl lying
looked up into that eye, eye without sight
whose circle gathered both sides of the screen:
conscious terrified eyes and numbed groin;
white figures, busy hands, flicker of steel
at the roots of life, a scarlet flood—
and other hands, quiet, soothing the head,
veiling the terrified staring eyes.

Hear
the gentle voice in the common foreign tongue
Encore un peu, mon enfant. Mon enfant, n'aie pas peur.
... but the knife whips out manhood, womanhood...

Was she an angel? Can angels be with devils?
Was he a devil because he worked for devils?
And what should we have been?
What, under that unrecording eye,
have done?