

Coached Though I Am

Coached though I am, the part is new
Foreign to me; I miss each cue
And haunt the backstage, wringing hands
Helpless to meet the Play's demands.

I find the audience too crude;
I find my lines are harsh and rude
And huddle in my dressing room
Amongst the dusters ... and a broom
Bright for new sweeping: fresh and crisp.
I hear the callboy, bright and brisk.
“You're on Miss Mona. Curtain up!”
I rise, and drain the fiery cup
And climb the stair and make my bow
And stumble through my lines somehow.

What farce comes next? What clowning “bit”
To turn the heart upon the spit.
To drain the blood and chill the eye
And teach me how to still the cry
That films my throat and bows my head
And leaves me something more than dead.

“You're on, Miss Mona!” Well, I know
Mouthing my lines, I rise and go.

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