

ANOTHER RUBBER

Monday, Wednesday, Friday :
Bone China, (Lily of the Valley), on egg-shell filet,
and silver spoons, third generation.
Silver candlesticks on the mantel.
Sherry in crystal, sparkling red-gold,
exquisite as these porcelain dolls
with family ring on frail finger,
wedding pearls resplendent on velvet.

Lace, tatted, crocheted, on throat, wrist...
heirloom lace
crafted by other generations of Eleanors and Sybils.
Lace on tables, lace on arm rests,
over the table for four hands.
Sepias framed in silver and walnut,
severe and solemn,
but bearing Jane's smile in Great Grandfather's eyes ;
family rubies on black satin.

Corseted, correct, bridge player unparalled, Hortense.
Amelia, ample, unruffled and wise. Tweeds and Oxfords.
Today, Eleanor pours.
Fingers of Christmas cake preserved in good wine,
sandwiches tiny and light as air.
Wisps of measured conversation with tinkles of laughter,
punctuated by Amelia's robust humour.
(delighted blushes on papery cheeks),
naughty Amelia!

Low'ring sun casts a rosy hue
on curls of blue-white, silver,
tidy and tight.

Goddesses, these, layered in elegance,
swathed in silken armour :
delicate warriors,
survivors of the reality of life.

Tea, and then another rubber.
There's plenty of time.

Isabel Blackmore