

JOAN COLBY

The Lonely Hearts Killers:
Raymond Fernandez & Martha Beck

Irresistable charm. He can
mesmerize with words.
They plunge from the page
into the blue veins of widows
ooze into pale blue ink.
These women's hands
describe ovals in the air,
fly to him like homing birds.

One of the first,
an obese nurse named Martha,
recognizes his genius.

They make a pair:
his comeon's
her greed.
O Love and Money.

He marries the lonely widows.
She slams them with a hammer
into a final solitude. They bury
victims in cellars of rented houses,
count the fleeced life-savings,
go to the cinema
where Cary Grant cocks a suave eye
and Barbara Stanwyck murmurs throatily.

A psychiatrist might tell us
Raymond's problem dates
from a shipboard accident
and Martha's from being raped
at 13 by her brother.

About the victims?
Somebody died on them. They were
lonely. Explanations, like reasons,
come after the fact. The act
of kissing the plump lady,
bashing her head in.

Eating popcorn while the black and white
figures prance and prattle. Which life is real?

She's crazy about him.
He loves her back, all 280
voluptuous pounds.

The police are waiting
when they return from the movies
laughing, gobbling chocolate kisses.

She gives the scandal sheets a treat:
her overactive glands drove her
into his arms. Twenty other women
fell just as hard, but forever.
Some of their bones exhumed, others
vanished. There's proof enough.
They get the chair.

She knows he loves her.
He knows she's been true.
Jerk and blaze
in one last intimacy
all they've been through,
now each lonely
heart shudders and fails.
Witnesses button their overcoats
walk to their cars.
 Rain falling on Sing Sing.

O Lonely Hearts.

