

# Church Mice

by [Susan J. Bryant](#) (June 2024)



Behind the Church (Hinter der Stadtkirche)– Lyonel Feininger, 1916

## *A Sonnet Corona*

There is a tale that's writ in German history.  
A church was passed each Sunday by a train.  
Its death-knell whistle blew as it flew swiftly  
To Hell as stricken souls shrieked out in vain.  
These yells were muffled by the lusty singing  
Of worshippers who harmonized with might

To quell the shock and stop a shudder ringing  
Through placid bones not fashioned for a fight.  
The plight and prayers of Jews, their destination,  
Meant naught if pious choirs couldn't hear  
The cars that chugged right by the congregation  
To monstrous fates that begged for mercy's ear.  
The deaf ignored the soaring roars of fright—  
Howls that haunted corners of the night.

Howls that haunt the corners of the night  
Taint my thoughts and taunt my starlit dreams.  
How do shepherds guide flocks to the light  
If they themselves are deaf to desperate screams  
Of lockdown lambs devoid of hope and help?  
Would shepherds of today just slam their door  
On every fretful yowl and fearful yelp  
From souls draconian overlords deplore?  
As ills are forced by experts decked with letters,  
As iron fists make errant thinkers pay,  
As means are crushed for questioning our betters—  
Do all those called by God just turn away?  
In times of tortured facts and bogus care  
Are shepherds blind to pits of bleak despair?

Are shepherds blind to pits of bleak despair  
Befouled with blood from babies torn apart?  
Are pastors uninformed and unaware  
Of brainwashed kids who nurse a joyless heart?  
Are vicars deaf to mutilated youth  
Neutered by the hormone-blocking ghouls?  
Do priests skip by the skewed subjective truth?  
Do pregnant men take clergymen for fools?  
Silence is salvation's deadly foe.  
When preachers of our time refuse to speak,  
They're dancing with the demons wielding woe—  
The beasts who draw their strength from all that's weak.  
The outcome of this stance is not a mystery—  
You've heard the tale that's writ in German history.

## [Table of Contents](#)

Susan Jarvis Bryant originally from the UK, now lives on the coastal plains of Texas. She has poetry published on *The Society of Classical Poets*, *Lighten Up Online*, *Snakeskin*, *Light*, *Sparks of Calliope*, *Expansive Poetry Online*, and *The Road Not Taken*. She also has poetry published in *The Lyric*, *Trinacria*, *Beth Houston's Extreme Formal Poems* and *Extreme Sonnets II anthologies*. Susan is the winner of the 2020 International Society of Classical Poets Poetry Competition and was nominated for the 2022 and 2024 Pushcart Prize. She has just published her first two books—*Elephants Unleashed* and *Fern Feathered Edges*.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)