

Two Poems From a Sequence: Nightmare Versions

In these bizarre times our own nightmares can seem a refuge.

by Evelyn Hooven (January 2016)

LODGED HOMELESSLY

Assigned a space

In less than an alcove

Across from Reception.

Try to sleep, fail, *enough*. . . .

When I ask—

Verve mustered at last—

For a *room* am taken

Late a long way towards

Another segment.

This escort—madam

Or competent matron—

Leaves me with others

I only gradually, for the locks

Are so numerous, notice.

Among such women and men

Will I be safe's

The wrong question,

Will this work-

No way out or in-

For curtailed sleep?

These room-mates

Are not quite menacing

But strangers to such an extreme

I wish the question

Will I live till morning

Were permitted here. . . .

Should I have tried

Before this

Elsewhere?

There are clubs, filled

Usually, still

I might have tried. . . .

No time for why

Or might, at dawn

Locks and strangers

Multiply.

Is this a flophouse

Out of an old city tale?

Not my milieu at all

But is it,

Has it *become*, my due?

WHO HAS SENT FOR THEM?

Who has sent for them?

They enter through windows

And whisper—

What will be done

This season?

What will be shown

What hidden?

Is it shoulders, wrists, calves?

Shall they be *hers*?

Is she the right size

Can we retouch

The terror in her eyes?

Such inanities, more—

I begin to know who they are. . . .

The revised orders:

Occupied territory

Streaked and empty,

A wish for death

But the contents spill too slowly,

A wish to see the enemy

Who stands

At no door everywhere.

Repetition's

Out of the question

Yet Time is as nothing,

And what will bind or sever

Where Mind is as nothing?

Evelyn Hooven graduated from Mount Holyoke College and received her M.A. from Yale University, where she also studied at The Yale School of Drama. A member of the Dramatists' Guild, she has had presentations of her verse dramas at several theatrical venues, including *The Maxwell Anderson Playwrights Series* in Greenwich, CT (after a state-wide competition) and *The Poet's Theatre* in Cambridge, MA (result of a national competition). Her poems and translations from the French have appeared in *ART TIMES*, *Chelsea*, *The Literary Review*, *THE SHOp: A Magazine of Poetry* (in Ireland), *The Tribeca Poetry Review*, *Vallum* (in Montreal), and other journals, and her literary criticism in Oxford University's *Essays in Criticism*.

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