

Spare the dreaming, let night's book remain
 open. Light tempts me, but I stay under
 the still hands of darkness, safe and
 fraught with a new day's threat;
 into the back alley of my
 open heart I am sent,
 trailing for a few
 new words, or
 even just
 one.

Dawn For One Who Has Not Slept

Too early, the smell of flirty peonies,
 the mower blades gush and scold
 my dreams, morning flutters in
 like dirty money, and I turn over.
 The dogs next door proclaim.
 I beg, leave me to my licking
 and gathering of medicine,
 my surrender. I fall back twice,
 yanked apart by fangs of sun,
 until I've banished the priesthood
 of light, and disappeared
 into the Old Religion of sleep.

Open Window

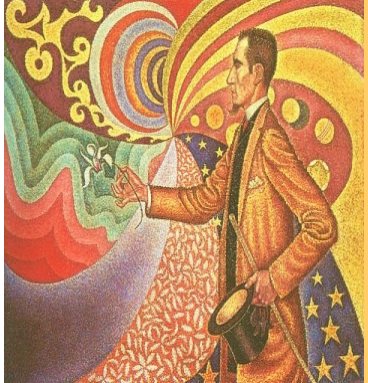
Last night I forgot to sleep,
 closed my notebook, traced
 a labyrinth on the blotter,
 spilled nothing, broke
 nothing, did not cry for my mother,
 though the knot of my navel
 grows raw and red,
 as if untying.
 This morning I wear her rings
 as if I am an heiress. I knock a vase
 off the shelf as if I'm not.
 Her death still
 makes me unable to lie down,
 and even the return of light
 is a gift I'm too ashamed to receive.

Long Dark

Night birds steal my sleep
 of lilacs and balm my musings
 everyone needs a mate
 or a dream of one. Apple trees
 scatter confetti over the lonely
 singers in the branches.
 The bad news of spring
 dissipates, arguments let go.
 The keening of winter
 has long since been replaced
 by new longings for joy.
 So the birds take my dreams,
 but give me back a poem.
 We are more than even;
 here comes dawn,
 and a new day's music.

May's Song

Long Dark : Poems of an Insomniac



*The blanket of night is tangling
 my soul, and odd visions twist me
 into unknown shapes, until morning
 when sleep shakes all the wrinkles free.*

Marguerite Flanders

Sleep Remedy

*Gather:
 the florid promise of bird feathers
 the underside of violet petals
 scrapings from cedar bark
 tangle of distant drumbeats
 the complexion of a fox
 glimpse of a kiss & a carnation
 the darkness from two corners
 three questions & four grasses
 silhouette of a sassafras tree
 glint of mica, reflected in a new dime
 reduction of high jinx
 the cheek fur from a chipmunk
 a pinch of forgiveness
 and clear water from a stream*

*Mix well and form into lozenges
 (figure out how to make lozenges
 next time you can't sleep)
 Take as needed.*

Night

rolls me up
 like a crepe, or a carpet,
 encloses me in its press
 of nourishment.
 June shrinks the dark;
 before I am even ready
 to doze, light
 spreads thinly through
 the woods. My rhythms
 of wakefulness and laughter
 defy earth's rounding
 of the sun. When the moon
 rises at dawn, I shut
 my soul's windows,
 and try, once again,
 to go under.

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Origami Poetry Project™

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