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The Blinding Walls
Lois Marie Harrod © 2012



THE BLINDING WALLS LOIS MARIE HARROD

A Little Poem
is best. No one
has time or
inclination
for voyages
or treks. Long
wars take
a life or more
and the shortest
spat becomes
a drawn-out
divorce. We've
been here and there
fore and aft.
So avoid story.
Avoid conflict
and all its sticky dead.
Be slick.
Be quick.
A little poem is best.

Truth Sat in the Barber Chair

Truth sat in the barber chair
bald and cold
except for the fringe
the blind woman
tried to trim.
It's often that way:
we pare the eyes
from the potato
and shuck the silk
from ears of corn.
But tidying up
the relative—
even to set it free—
reveals how naked
truth can be.

Splitting the Chair

Like dividing
a baby—
Solomon knew
which mother
by her distress.
But the chair was hideous
and the child,
not easy either.
So take it,
a new body before she's shrunk under,
just in case her man returns from his wanderings
to stand at her casket, to say he loved
her once with the terseness of men
who drift, who suddenly remember
You chose
the chameleon green.
Keep it,
he says,
believing
he is generous.

Penelope Decides What to Wear to Her Funeral

Depends, she says, on when she dies:
in winter the blue silk
with its Mediterranean shifts,
in summer, white clouds,
the blinding walls of Mykonos.
Whatever the weather,
she will look good, better than life,
Botox can do that these days,
a new body before she's shrunk under,
just in case her man returns from his wanderings
to stand at her casket, to say he loved
her once with the terseness of men
who drift, who suddenly remember
that once they promised to be faithful
as the flotsam that bore them home.

Breadcrumbs

So many substitutions in this story:
stepmother for mother, brother for father,
morsels of muffin for little white stones,

and once the oven was hot, witch for boy,
and in earlier locations, Gretel for pearl,
grill for teeth, take my thumbs for chicken bones,

grandma, take my babies for wolf meat.
I'd give you my incisors, my mother said
when I knocked out my own, carrion for crow,

cave for castle, ogre for goat who suddenly regrets
he didn't eat the damn kid when he could have.
In some tales a few children get back home.