

Sleeping with Demons

POEMS

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Sleeping with Demons

poems by

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Sleeping with Demons

For those who hear demons.
You are not alone.

a shadow

something both there and not there
an interruption of light, an echo [silent]
a place to hide, store secrets escape

i had a cat named shadow once
not silent that cat could talk [complain]
though he did manage to hide [away]
every night when mother called him in

he ran into the street when i was seven
we found his tail a block away [echo]

in a dream, a man with hands and a face
shrouded in darkness in ebonies in grays
told me you were but a shadow [now]
something both there and not there
an interruption of life, an echo [silent]

maybe i'm a shadow to you [specter]
as you gaze at me from the other side

when i woke, i could see the outline
of where the man stood, hands on my
shoulders [maybe], hot breath on my face
the wake in the air after someone leaves

something both there and not there

the barn

you enter that space
where nothing can follow
not even dreams

and breathe deep the dry air
until you reach the place
where the light falls

from two panes and shadows
flicker across the floor
covered in cast-off cigarette packs

in the spot where you once
stood on the threshold of being a girl
and being a woman

and there you stop
and listen for her voice or
watch for the flowers on her skirt

Meditation on the Seven

in seven words, on seven lines, in seven stanzas

One (Lust)

I'm pretty sure this is an oversight,
not a sin, because who doesn't lust?
Why make sin central to our existence?
This must be a mistake in translation,
something taken out of context and dropped
on the unsuspecting faithful like a stone.

Two (Gluttony)

People love to let this one slide.
Look around if you don't believe me.
No need for faith in my words—
the evidence surrounds us in supersized truth.
Bible-thumping gluttons press my buttons. How
can you eat your cake in grace
while thousands die of starvation every day?

Three (Greed)

Just try avoiding avarice in America today.
It seems being boiled alive in oil
is a fair price for your luxury—
as long as it's the best oil
money can buy. I do my best
to ignore cupidity's claws. Tell me, how
many pairs of shoes are too many?

Four (Sloth)

I sat on the blue couch today,
as if that would make a difference.
It didn't. The boredom, the apathy, the
indolence. The refusal to do what needs
doing—they remain successful partners in crime.
I tell myself omission isn't a sin,
but lying about sinning is another sin.

Five (Wrath)
Yesterday, a driver on crowded Highway 101
wouldn't let me in, forcing me to
creep along the dirty shoulder, blinker flashing,
until someone let my car slowly sleaze
into the unending line of unmoving vehicles.
I imagined 101 ways for the asshole
to suffer and die, sealing my fate.

Six (Envy)
Since I don't care much about money,
I thought I was safe. And then
I saw the women on his screen
and it gripped me from the inside.
I've tried confession and prayer, but nothing
works to cool the flames of jealousy
and my desire to take their place.

Seven (Pride)
I tell my kids I am proud
of them, their major accomplishments, their minor
efforts. Is that wrong? I ask him.
He adjusts his collar and looks up.
I don't know if he's looking for
help from God or if my questions
annoy him, but he never answers me.