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Elegy: For a Rehab

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Elegy: For A Rahab

BY ELLEN MOORE

She has gone,
Fled beyond dawn and river mist,
Beyond the grasp
Of her agile eyed debtors
Whose self-sustaining vision
Falters only at the brink
Of eternity;
For she has left them nothing,
No more than a remnant of retribution or revenge
Strung between life and death,
Nothing to profane
That each she knew not.

Then which of these shall speak
Or sing her flight,
Her final flaunting of propriety—
The men in flannel, khaki, denim,
The bearded and the beardless?
All their women,
The waiting, whispering women
Who cursed her in their beds
Or hearded homeward, hearthward
Husbands, lovers, sons?
And how shall they remember,
How etch her epitaph
Into the gray granite of perspective?

If they be heirs
To more than casual covenants,
More than ritual inebriates of sacrificial wine—
These men who share their guilt as brotherhood,
These women weaving mercy of morality—
Perhaps there shall arise
A prophet,
One who dares demand
The bartered birthright for the yet unborn,
A haven for the living,
A heaven for the dead,
Saying:

Mourn for her who dwelt upon the wall
And bound her hair with scarlet cord,
Waiting for the sons of Israel,
The trumpets of a second Jerico.

