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# The Widow Burden's Suspicions About John Sprockett

by Robert Cooperman

When Mr. Sprockett haunted my cottage —  
the night my husband never returned —  
and left that pouch Christmased with nuggets,  
he refused to say why the gold belonged to me.

Whenever I've thought of his visit,  
a scorpion chill creeps into my heart,  
For the one offense that badman finds  
unforgivable: disrespect to the weaker sex.

Alive, my husband cast amorous eyes —  
and more — at Mary LaFrance.  
Not a large leap across a narrow chasm  
to think Thomas would leave a barren wife:  
an abomination to Gold Creek's preacher.

From there, no more than a stride  
over a dry stream bed  
for him to consider divorce a sin  
he could no more countenance  
than deny Jesus spoke directly to him.

And from believing  
a legal sundering blasphemous,  
Thomas had only one course left,  
my heart rasping like a rabbit  
in one of Mr. Eagle Feather's snares,  
to contemplate his dread logic.

