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# The Widow Burden, After Her Second Interview with John Sprockett

by Robert Cooperman

I thought I could bear the worst  
as if I'd only spent an evening  
practicing hymns.  
But when Mr. Sprockett reluctantly  
nodded that yes, my minister husband  
had indeed wanted me dead,  
the earth crumbled around me.

I fear I insulted Mr. Sprockett,  
by not allowing him to bear me up  
when I staggered from the treachery.  
It wasn't his scar-scratched face  
that made me turn away, but his knowing  
that for Thomas I was an inconvenience.

I suppose I should feel flattered  
Mr. Sprockett considers me a lady,  
a saint worthy of poetry.  
But all we women really wish for  
is to be treated with respect.  
If we're quoted verses to as well,  
a Christmas window display.

Somehow, I reached the cottage  
Thomas and I once shared,  
resolved to quit it at once,  
but fatigue shackled my arms and legs.  
All I could think of:  
if only William would hold me,  
and say there was one haven  
on this earth where I was welcome.

