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# Mary LaFrance Speculates on the Father of Her Unborn Child

by Robert Cooperman

I never told Preacher  
it might not be his: no sense  
stepping on a sunning rattler.  
Sure, the Reverend set me up  
in a cottage; but waiting  
for his visits was long  
as a moaning blizzard winter,  
and Patience cards never turned up  
my way, even when I cheated.  
So I entertained, gifts handy,  
had Preacher gone back on his word:  
no telling how a white man'll act  
when a baby bears him less  
likeness than a papoose.

One man not in the contest,  
One-eyed John Sprockett;  
his grizzly-slashed face shudders me  
like every ghost killed in the War.  
Only other gent who can't join the list,  
the breed tracker, Eagle Feather.  
I only do white men, though I'd bet  
Widow Burden wouldn't mind  
a buggy ride to Heaven with him,  
the way she stared at the funeral,  
then shifted her eyes quick  
as the flutter of a butterfly's wings.

Come to think of it,  
I might make an exception for him,  
his face more handsome  
than the one of Jesus  
I cut out of a book once,  
to stare at on my wall.

