



6-15-2005

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### Recommended Citation

Cooperman, Robert (2005) "The Widow Burden, the Night After Her Husband's Funeral," *Westview*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 2 , Article 41.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol24/iss2/41>

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# The Widow Burden, the Night After Her Husband's Funeral

by Robert Cooperman

If only I could make Mr. Sprockett  
confess what transpired between him  
and my husband at the abandoned shaft.  
But why should I care how or why  
my husband left this world,  
when he had taken up with a saloon girl?

Because I must solve the evil riddle  
Aunt prophesied for my marriage  
to a man of unbending Scripture:  
Father and I dazzled by the sermons  
Thomas spun like an impromptu spider:  
Aunt the only one immune to his weaving.

A whisper warns, "You know why he died."  
But I want to hear it from Mr. Sprockett,  
whom I surprised leaving me a gold pouch  
the night my husband disappeared.

That night I clutched the gold, sobbing.  
"Is this what love meant to you, Thomas?"  
Now, I shudder to think of speaking  
to Mr. Sprockett's bear-troweled face,  
his scars the least of what I fear  
from our interview.

If only I possessed the courage  
to ask Mr. Eagle Feather  
to accompany me, but no doubt  
he considers me only a white woman  
who runs in terror  
from his beautiful half-breed face.

