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Sleep

Krista Canterbury Adams

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Abstract

All night frowns down. We listen to the spirit voices
Alive in the grove,

Additional Keywords

Poetry; Canterbury Adams

As soon as the second shoe slipped away, almost in one motion, she swept up the seven children in her arms and rushed through the front door into the street before her house. She didn't get dressed. She didn't close the door behind her.

Now the cobbler had just made a fine sale, and had gone down the road to the bakery to buy fresh rolls with his earnings. He was humming as he made his way back to his own shop, a low tune he had heard once somewhere, a happy memory of yellow, blue, and green that he couldn't quite place.

She saw him moments before he saw her himself, and she knew him though he was somewhat abstracted, not comprehending her appearance in the light of day, with fourteen additional naked limbs squirming and writhing within her grasp. She looked down at her feet.

They were too pale, too pink and purple, too soft against the compact soil from their years of confinement within the little green shoes. She would bleed, she was sure; it would hurt her to dig, and she would not recover for a long time. She looked up to meet his eyes; saw the consternation and concern. It was worth it.

She smiled at him, a bright, toothy smile, that would linger for days or years on the inside of his eyelids, burning brilliantly ever deeper into his mind. And then, with a grinding sound of stone against stone, in a flashing cloud of red dust, she was gone, down into the earth in the way of trolls, taking all seven of her children with her.

The cobbler never saw any of them again.

A Poem by Krista Canterbury Adams Sleep

All night frowns down.
We listen to the spirit voices
Alive in the grove,
Voices so much like water
Moving over smooth stones.
We listen to the unearthly trees
High above in the dark—

“Sleep,”
Say the owls from the black branches,
“All things sleep at our feet.”

This sleep,
A shower of leaves.
This sleep,
Winter melting
Into the trees.