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Driven by Mystery

M. Longstreth

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DRIVEN BY MYSTERY

M. LONGSTRETH

Profile of the Poet

Born in Missouri, Mary Longstreth's childhood in California, Utah, Georgia, New Jersey and points in between nurtured an historical and cross-cultural perspective of spirituality and daily living. She obtained a degree in sociology from Goucher College and currently works in the employee benefits field. Mary is deeply committed to the issue of homelessness and is involved with several organizations that assist homeless individuals and families in Philadelphia. She currently resides in East Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

BAPTISM

*grey waves slide over
granite boulders and
collide with tumbled
pebbles under chalk
cliffs.*

*a sliver of cream crescent
annoints evening shadows
of plush white hunting
owls, plummage spread and
foam through untested racks
of bone, caramel rutting
stags. stone chalice brushing
the milky lips of stars
beyond the kiss of muted
sparrows.*

SPIRITLESS

*Her face has aged into a frown,
lines curve down surrounding
pursed lips that ooze perfection,
pupils mirror distaste, bitterness,
correction. Knuckles arthritic
from sleeping in fetid water,
black with disease, carnivorous
tendrils stretch to encircle
pure flesh, poison trusting
children. Soul cold on days
when angels sing. Shades
drawn against the sun. Oaks
bent under fog, spiders own
cracks between branches, spitting
pollen, corn snakes change
to cobras, hoods flaired like
manta fins, fangs venom full
in defense.*

CACOPHANY

*in godliness they cleanse,
themselves, walking, holy,
barefoot shadows across
granite boulder horizon.
setting sun, orange and
white light outlines gaunt,
transparent figures, shines
through long hands crossed
over fruitless breasts,
chins raised with translucent
choral lips chanting to
divinity. The spirit fills
them and flees pristeen
self-righteousness.*

WESTMEATH

*I knelt in Westmeath,
Laracor parishyard,
wrapped my arms
around faceless tombstones,
rooted in black Tuatha soil.*

*I heard the bleating of
blackfaced sheep, grazing
over passage mounds,
sheltering the torques
and skulls of Teffian chieftains.*

*I'm faceless again,
bearing only the tabby
mark of women caught
between bards and Brigid,
culdees and Ceridwen,
christians and fairies.*

