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Spider Webs, Skies, and Seas: A Eulogy

Mary Dengler

Along a spider-woven interstate of webs
atop the window hedge,
like lacy asphalt roads
or weathered fishing lines strung out on leafy waves
reflecting sea and graying sky—
the super highways crossed by jets and ancient gods,
like porous asphalt curtains bridging waves
of undulating blue—
a bulbous spider floats,
Achillian in his bulky battle gear
equipped with javelin and sword,
and without gloating hurries toward
his thrashing sacrifice
as trapped as Agamemnon in the nets of fate.

Apollo-like in anguish for his rapidly encased
and pinioned silver guest,
whose vitals he'd suck dry with Draculean skill,
I charge his infrastructure,
dragging Transylvanian webs into a sticky mass,
then drive my bamboo stake through crusty segments
toward his bloated bloodless gut.

My prodding stick collapses his whole street,
as when crosswinds drive a Delta fleet
one hundred feet below their course,
or riptides on a summer's day
the unsuspecting swimmer suck beneath the Carolina waves
in undertow
when full of strength and childhood glee,
he stops his car to play.

My spider checked, his mate must reconstruct
her Aeolian world of floating roads
and fishing lines,
where darkness goads and draws her victims
for her evening catch.
From many a struggling silver moth,
I watch in horror as she sucks indifferently
her bitter supper broth.

My plane, sucked down by crosswinds to a dark abyss,
survived its plunge through cloudy froth
but forced our breathless prayers between its silver wings.

The riptide sucked my colleague to an airless world
to sing a more developed sonnet form in Bliss
and leave us wordless,
struggling in his wake.

Chastised by memory of the natural Design—
so starkly eternized by Robert Frost that one is left awake
in equipoise of fear and trust,
of hate and love,
as when I struck in blind revenge at one who,
like me, struggles for his daily bread, but who,
with simple tools of instinct, skill, and silky sap,
must toil unhampered by a moral law—
I let the widow make her flawless kill
Within the terrifying will of God.