

## **POEMS BY ELIZABETH CARROLL HAYDEN**

### **W.F. Rose Meat Market, Redmond 1898**

On a carcass and pelt draped porch  
blood-red air weaves past  
a woman veiled by its shadow  
big-city hat perched upon her head.

Blood-red air threads into  
the fur coat draped about her shoulders  
and the big-city hat perched upon her head  
that Montgomery-Ward delivered by rail.

With a fur coat draped around her shoulders  
that warms in the damp, muddy west beyond the mountains  
where Montgomery-Ward delivers by rail  
and they send back bear skins stretched and nailed.

In the damp, muddy west across the mountains  
a woman veiled by their shadows  
stands near the bear skin stretched and nailed  
to the carcass and pelt draped porch.

### **The War to End All Wars to End All Wars to End**

The Goddess Nike wings across the sky  
she leaves us chaste and we waltz Athena,  
the grey-eyed Warrior Goddess, loathe to war,  
we plead until she wraps us in her arms.

Athena's beauty stands without a scar,  
she holds the winged Nike on her hand,  
while we dance ravaged, tear-stained and stripped bare  
when War God Ares arose to steal the floor.

Now resist, the winged Goddess Victory,  
she's hiding in the fertile soil below.  
Remain a virgin in our war's desire,  
lest Athena's olive arms implore us,

for her beauty always begs us to waltz,  
on broken bones beneath the bleeding grass.

## **A Small Bank in Turn of the Century Redmond and the Fall of Washington Mutual**

Knee deep in autumn muck  
the mud holds tight, brick heavy  
weighed down against the fall,  
one story stands tall through  
black Tuesday.

While our tall towers spring  
separate from earth, reach  
sky high until the weight of  
the muck inside rains down  
and drags the empty floors  
back to earth.

### **School Children**

Crammed fast under the plank roof,  
Sunday best today, while you step  
out with nineteen faces  
into the rain hazed day.

Tomorrow will they walk barefoot  
through empty roads? Mud deep  
to squeeze between the toes  
where felled trees brand  
the vacant land. Not today,  
today they wear their Sunday best.

You wait, ducking raindrops,  
for nineteen faces to arrive.  
This two-month long sojourn  
through school days with your jacket  
buttoned one high,  
while dressed in their Sunday best  
unblinking faces stare,  
waiting to be seared onto the page  
so more than DNA will be remembered.

## **The Fawn**

White sheets, like sails, separate,  
a fence to the forest.  
She stands straight-eyed, no fear,  
not of the camera  
or the small deer eating  
the leaf from her hand.

White sheets drape like sails.  
Separated from the forest  
the deer stands straight  
and eyes the child holding the leaf,  
she eats,  
no fear of the camera.

Mama watches from the back,  
apron like a sail, only draped sheets  
separate home from the forest.  
She stares straight,  
eyes watching her child with the leaf.  
Fear, but not of the camera.

Doe eyes watching behind  
sheets draped like sails.  
Fear she can't feed her,  
a white fence separates  
her and her forest,

from her small deer eating  
a leaf from the child.

## **One-Eye Blind in the Eagle Bar Saloon**

Orson Wiley's Finest Sample Room  
samples swilled from the one eyed-man  
one-eye watching half-the-world,  
the half that leans on reflective black,  
feet resting on the long brass bar.  
One eye blind to the unseen half,  
home, waist tied tight  
with babbling babies  
and clinging children  
demanding dinner while you

dressed in your bowler hat  
stand staring at the camera.  
Defiant clink, clink, clink  
coins clatter on polished black  
reflection, traded for a Bentley,  
a glass of gentle fuzz,  
knocked back while we knocked up  
wait, tile floor traded for worn wood,  
pace-polished while hips balance babies,  
and children clutch beneath  
while we beg dry with eyes wide and black  
reflecting  
our unseen half.

## **Sisters**

The hollow thump of wadded cloth  
chants as it beats the side  
of the galvanized tub  
and echoes across the blanched sky.  
Side by side, hands plunged into tepid water,  
scrubbed raw to wash stains and uncover white.  
The vacant words we speak past each other  
bounce off the glass while the sunlight shines  
on panes you bolted against the world,  
bleached curtains drawn tight.  
The patterned grey in silver flakes  
expose the door of my hearth.  
I beg you enter while daylight bleeds  
in from the back window  
and halides absorb the dusk.  
I see past the dark but cannot reveal  
the closed eyes of my sister's core.

## **Day at the Races**

Sluicing by the swamp grass  
that grows on the brink  
of the sodden stream.  
Steps from the footbridge  
the swarming throngs  
of young men  
dream of narrow boats  
that zip away from the windmill  
and slice the spine of the slough  
splashing its murky spray  
as they rocket past the present.

## **Triumph**

Corduroy roads skid down  
from round hills stripped bare.  
Thunderous roar,  
ancient timber, groaning,  
slams fast to the ground  
leaving the stump, wounded limb.