
The Case of Charity Lamb (2015)

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Silence of the Lambs

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*SILENCE OF
THE LAMBS*

A POETRY COLLECTION

BY RUBY GUYOT

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION OF POETRY AND SHORT PROSE SEEKS TO BUILD ON THE IDEA THAT SO LITTLE IS ACTUALLY KNOWN OF CHARITY LAMB AND HER THOUGHTS AND IDEAS ABOUT EVERYTHING FROM HER PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE TO THE KILLING OF HER HUSBAND NATHANIEL. THIS COLLECTION HONORS THESE UNKNOWN PAGES OF HISTORY BY PROVIDING SEVERAL DIFFERENT STATES OF MIND ON BEHALF OF CHARITY LAMB, INCLUDING GUILT (OR LACK OF IT), RELIEF, FEAR, AND LONELINESS.

I Didn't Mean to Do It

I didn't mean to do it, I told them with a sigh
He beat me until I was blue and said that I would die
He told me he would shoot the kids and then he grabbed his gun
As soon as I hit him with the axe, I knew that he had won.

He beat me until I was blue and said that I would die
I wanted to leave, but I couldn't bear to tell the kids goodbye
As soon as I hit him with the axe, I knew that he had won
So I struck him at the dinner table in front of our two sons.

I wanted to leave, but I couldn't bear to tell the kids goodbye
I knew that it would break my heart to hear the baby cry
So I struck him at the dinner table in front of our two sons
As soon as he hit the floor, I knew my life was done.

I knew that it would break my heart to hear the baby cry
So I made my bed, in blood and tears, where I'd forever lie
As soon as he hit the floor, I knew my life was done
I grabbed everything that I could and then I began to run.

So I made my bed, in blood and tears, where I'd forever lie
The loneliness of prison life makes me miss the Missouri sky
I grabbed everything that I could and then I began to run
They caught me, convicted me, and threw me in jail; Nathaniel, you have won.

Judgement Day

A thin strip of light floats in through an adjacent window, settling in a ring around her head.

Dressed in rags and appearing unkempt, returning from a voyage to Bethlehem, she slumps over in the chair.

At her breast is a baby, not yet old enough to crawl, gazing hungrily out at the growing crowd.

It was advertised at church the previous Sunday: 'Come and watch the possessed woman for yourself! See the devil in her beady eyes, the red complexion of Hell smattered on her guilty face!'

The people are disappointed to see her condition. She is martyred to the cause.

Her confessors enter the room in succinct lines, waiting to hear her hymn. They have already made their decision. She is covered in a cloak of sin.

The Mother Charity sits with her baby at the stand, waiting to tell her tale.

She faces the crowd.

Judgement Day has begun.

Charity

The act of giving
two sharp axe blows to the head.
But he deserved it.

Sheepish

Nobody thought that
a woman could kill a man,
let alone a Lamb.

Silence

No one can hear your
pained cries from two miles away.
Should've lived in town.

Under the Moonlight

Whiskey pours like water flowing down the river when water rises above the banks. In daylight hours, there is work to be done; the children, the household, the farm... When night falls, there is silence. Crickets and frogs hold conversations in the dusk while the plants, the grass, the trees, and the water rescinds into a peaceful slumber, unhindered by human caresses. The rocks and the stones quiet down and become soft, enabling anyone to lie in their embrace and drift off under the moonlight. From a distance, the laughter of children. Not tonight. The children will not sleep tonight. They will never sleep again.

My father took me once to the riverbank after our dog had another litter to show me how he drowned the runts. I was aghast with the concept, and tried to run away, but he pulled me by my dress sleeve and forced me to watch the process. When it was done, he wiped off his hands, looked me in the eye, and told me, "Sometimes, things just need to die."

And so that's how it had to be. As I took another drink from my glass bottle, I threw my head up to the moonlight. When I walked out of the house that night, I wiped the blood off of my hands, looked straight up at the sky, and called out, "He just needed to die."

They will not believe my story, but the moon always will.