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The Blinding Walls  
Lois Marie Harrod © 2012



## THE BLINDING WALLS LOIS MARIE HARROD

**A Little Poem**  
is best. No one  
has time or  
inclination  
for voyages  
or treks. Long  
wars take  
a life or more  
and the shortest  
spat becomes  
a drawn-out  
divorce. We've  
been here and there  
fore and aft.  
So avoid story.  
Avoid conflict  
and all its sticky dead.  
Be slick.  
Be quick.  
A little poem is best.

### Truth Sat in the Barber Chair

Truth sat in the barber chair  
bald and cold  
except for the fringe  
the blind woman  
tried to trim.  
It's often that way:  
we pare the eyes  
from the potato  
and shuck the silk  
from ears of corn.  
But tidying up  
the relative—  
even to set it free—  
reveals how naked  
truth can be.

### Splitting the Chair

Like dividing  
a baby—  
Solomon knew  
which mother  
by her distress.  
But the chair was hideous  
and the child,  
not easy either.  
So take it,  
she says,  
to the one  
who is leaving.  
You chose  
the chameleon green.  
Keep it,  
he says,  
believing  
he is generous.

### Penelope Decides What to Wear to Her Funeral

Depends, she says, on when she dies:  
in winter the blue silk  
with its Mediterranean shifts,  
in summer, white clouds,  
the blinding walls of Mykonos.  
Whatever the weather,  
she will look good, better than life,  
Botox can do that these days,  
just in case her man returns from his wanderings  
to stand at her casket, to say he loved  
her once with the terseness of men  
who drift, who suddenly remember  
that once they promised to be faithful  
as the flotsam that bore them home.

### Breadcrumbs

So many substitutions in this story:  
stepmother for mother, brother for father,  
morsels of muffin for little white stones,

and once the oven was hot, witch for boy,  
and in earlier locations, Gretel for pearl,  
grill for teeth, take my thumbs for chicken bones,

grandma, take my babies for wolf meat.  
I'd give you my incisors, my mother said  
when I knocked out my own, carrion for crow,

cave for castle, ogre for goat who suddenly regrets  
he didn't eat the damn kid when he could have.  
In some tales a few children get back home.