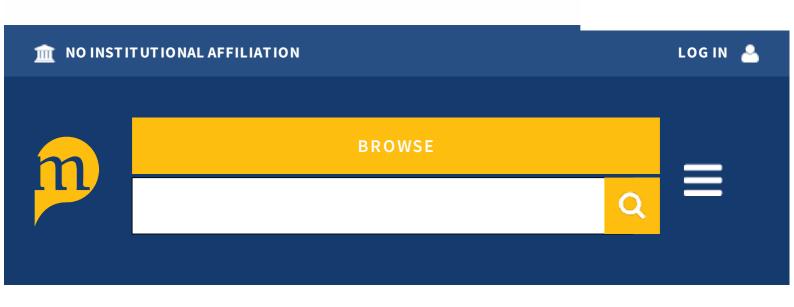
Dragons: A Poem-Cycle.

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O Dragons: A Poem-Cycle

Jill Hammer

Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion

Indiana University Press

Volume 31, Number 2, Fall 2015

pp. 83-87

ARTICLE

View Citation

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

DragonsA Poem-Cycle

Jill Hammer

The Dragon and the Unicorn

She will never understand

why he does not eat the maiden and be done.

If that white horn were hers, she would use it differently: to play dance tunes for volcanoes. To pierce God.

She will not lay her head in a pale lap.

She despises halters,

and even before she was born, she was not a virgin.

She has a double portion of lust

for the world and for what lies behind the world.

The unicorn vanquishes death. The dragon is not impressed.

She curls around the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, flicks her tail, pretends to doze.

The unicorn gazes at heaven. The dragon eyes a bird.

The maiden shows the unicorn a mirror, round and perfect as Venus, its blond handle graceful.

The unicorn looks into the mirror and smiles.

The maiden shows the mirror to the dragon.

The dragon breathes on it.

It cracks into a million pieces,

each one reflecting her burning eyes.

Has she not improved matters? [End Page 83]

Death will be back. She has no doubt of it

and it will be her turn then.

She will choose differently.

She will let death live

in her, and consult it

at every moment. [End Page 84]

Dragon on the Subway

She wants to be alone, rush down round darkness solitary.

The people are a nuisance, their thick faces,

their calves in leather boots,

their clumsy winter coats,

their separate silences, their eyes that never alight.

She only feels close to the subway,

its energy, its power,

its hurtling along the same rutted track.

The subway she can understand,

its need for rhythm, its rules, its snapping doors.

She doesn't feel kin to the people squashed into seats,

only to the city, that salon of shadows,

that wine cellar of bottled motion.

It is the subway that sings to her

endlessly, molding her body to its sound.

She clings to the tarnished silver of the pole.

Everything is looking at her,

the briefcases, the glasses, the sweaters, the scarves.

She hates to be looked at. She hides her face with her wings,

blows smoke in veils around her.

Don't look at me, look at the advertisments

for dermatologists who use fruit juice

to peel away the skin. Look at the photographs of battered women.

Look at the lines of amputated poetry.

Look at the creatures nesting in your heads.

Don't look at me. I am a legendary

monster. I am nothing to see. I don't exist.

The walls close in again. There is a seat.

She curls herself into a ball,

shuts her eyes to rest, wishes a second time

she had the subway tunnels to herself.

The conductor calls: stand clear of the closing doors. [End Page 85]

Dragon at the Gynecologist's Office

It is as if she has never been

here before. He asks a nurse to hold her hand, chooses his least invasive implement.

She takes off her clothes slowly, procrastinating.

She does not want to be pared down.

The clock ticks off its seconds until she lies flat and open like a wedding present after the wedding. He probes her shadows. Inside her is a limest one cave full of mysterious formations, nodules building drop by drop over the ages, marble curtains, pillars kissing. There are pools that perfectly reflect the icicles of stone hanging above them. Which of these growths are normal? The physician cannot tell. He is disturbed by her unchartable territory. She meditates on the ceiling, wondering if she is like a starfish: if he breaks off her breasts, will they grow back? He swabs from her a sample of her flesh for laboratory technicians she will never meet. This seems obscene to her, promiscuous, akin to a crooked condom lying in the park. The nurse lets go her hand: another betrayal.

The gynecologist has good news for her: her caves are just like boxes, all in order. She feels obscurely angry, violated. When he is not watching, she eats his speculum. [End Page 86]

The Dragon Considers the Root of Evil

They call her Satan,

JFSR 31.2 (2015) 83-87

In a Different Voice

DRAGONS

A Poem-Cycle Jill Hammer

The Dragon and the Unicorn

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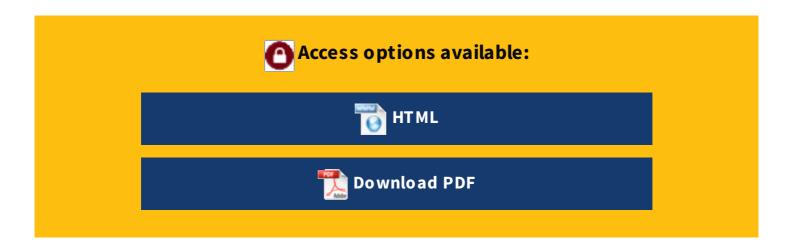
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