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The Book of Hours (Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award)

Marianne Boruch

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"Marianne Boruch's work has the wonderful, commanding power of true attention."—*The Washington Post*

"[H]er patience, her willingness to wait for the film of familiarity to slip, allows her to see what is there with a jeweler's sense of facet and flaw."—*Poetry* magazine

Endearingly strange, unsentimental, and uniquely structured, in true Rilkean fashion *The Book of Hours* questions the meaning and significance of everything from the flaws of human interaction to perfect posture. Unrelenting honesty and exacting description are coupled with the trials of a dying mother, saint shadows, birds, and "shit drying to chalk."

My mother's body to wires, to tubes
and their liquid, days she turned toward me
or away, winter but so much sun
from car to door. I followed it past nurses

at their station talking movies, who's good
in one and not the other. Gown tied
at the back and neck, she slept beside
a window. I wedged my chair there, reading,

looking up, reading,—who knows what
I read—her legs bruised, thin, arms battered
by the doctor's needle. Her face. Can I
say this plainly now? There was light

as she grew less. She drifted to it.
I'm not hungry, not religious, I'm in a spot,
she told me one afternoon then
closed her eyes to that radiance again.

Marianne Boruch grew up in Chicago and earned a masters degree from the University of Massachusetts. She teaches at Purdue University and at Warren Wilson College. She lives in West Lafayette, Indiana.

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Joseph Cobble:

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Dale Vaught:

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