

Cindy Veach -- Two Poems

Rebecca Nurse

Hanged, July 16, 1692

At first the jury returned *not guilty*
to which the judge said

retire and reconsider
the *not*.

After all she had not answered
the question she had not heard—

guilty of being hard of hearing
maybe mouthing

what?

Guilty of having a temper—
arguing with neighbors.

Guilty too of piety—
thirty-nine attesting

to her deep devotion.
Still, The Afflicted swore

it was her apparition
that did the *pinchings*

and *prickings* of their flesh.
And in court, when she raised her arms,

The Afflicted raised their arms.
And when she inclined her head

The Afflicted inclined their heads.

Quotes (in italics): Salem Witch Trials, Documentary Archive and Transcription Project
http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/texts/tei/swp?div_id=n137

Margaret Scott
Hanged, September 22, 1692

I knocked on doors. Asked
for coins for corn.
Each time I thought

I could not
but each time hunger
stole my tongue—

Please, may I *gleane* corn
in your *felld*? Daniel Wycomb, you would not
part with any ears.

Guilt, not me, is the reason
*that ye oxen would not goe forward:
but backward with ye load of corn.*

Look at me—
a widow for so long
I've forgotten his face

but not the faces
of every child I lost.
They say I lost too many

and must hang
for this and *sundry other Acts
of Witchcraft.*

Quotes (in italics):*Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription*
Project http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/texts/tei/swp?div_id=n98 Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley. (Boston: Ferdinand Andres, 1840) 171-172*

Cindy Veach is the author of *Gloved Against Blood* (CavanKerry Press), named a finalist for the 2018 Paterson Poetry Prize. Her poetry has appeared in the *Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day*, *AGNI*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Poet Lore*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Journal*, *North American Review*, *Salamander* and elsewhere. She lives in Manchester, MA.