

Jadene Felina Stevens

Hotel Room, 1931: The Phoenix

After a painting by Edward Hopper, 1931

Naked, a young woman sits on the edge of a bed.
A letter droops in her hands.
Night has erased the city outside.
White walls are a blank backdrop
to the woman, the letter, the night.
The hour of transformation.
A flurry of invisible feathers
falls among the burning silences
among the char-colored words scrawled across the page.
Tomorrow, when she has finished her change
she will shave her legs, comb her hair
carefully apply a rosy lipstick
put on the most stylish clothes she owns...
but tonight...
tonight
she is dying.

Note: thinking of the legend of the phoenix bird.

Summer In The City, 1949

After a painting by Edward Hopper, 1949.

A wet, lethargic day
drags through the city.
The pavement holds the heat
below a dull, empty sky.
No breeze drifts
through the unadorned window.
Hot brutal light floods over the sill.
A man naked on the narrow bed
buries his face in the pillow
the sheet beneath him stark
as a blank canvas.

A woman in a nightdress sits
on the edge of the bed holding her elbows
staring...
at shadows beneath the window
at a mesmerizing patch of light
puddled on the floor.
The man waits
for the heat to end
for the day to end
for the sun to sink into the harbor.
The woman seems to be waiting
for a shift ...
a shift
she knows
may never occur...
tonight, she'll wait for sleep to draw its curtain
between them.
In the morning, she'll wait for another night
followed by another dull morning.
She will wait
through the stifling heat
in a stifling hotel room
and wait
and...
wait.

Jadene Felina Stevens, The Saltwinds Poet, is an award-winning poet who has been widely published. Her poetry has appeared in a number of major anthologies, as well as in *The Aureorean*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Off the Coast Poetry Journal*, *Cape Women Magazine*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Brevities*, and elsewhere.