

## **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.