

[Prospectus:]

Would it really be so bad:
dinner for one and
a quiet nest to curl up in?

I could live on feathered nothings
far longer than you think
and still keep warm at night.

I could spin my days of string
and hair and grass, collecting bees
in my mouth and throwing
them back.

The truth is:
I cannot be domesticated.

The truth is:
I will always find
the deepest corner of a room
and crouch there.

Leave the door unlatched
and I will slip
out of the party

and follow my bird-heart back.

Shirley Jackson is an Advice Columnist
for the *Bennington Banner*

Vermont, 1962

Dear Haunted in Hoosick Falls,

Do not mothproof your heart.

Let them make lace-work
of the love you've got left.
Build a nest of leaves
 and branches
 and moss and

bury a spoon
 outside the door.

If you hold these words
behind your tongue
 and swallow,

they will keep you safe inside:

Arsenic.
Mycoflora.
Lupine.

Remember: it takes a village
to burn a house down.

Atomic Age 1

The first time I heard it
I thought she said Adam Bomb.

I thought original sin and the smell
of apple pie for miles around.

I thought the fruit of knowledge
explosive and red-hot, a firecracker
in a closed fist.

I thought a girl with no hands
and all the wiser for it.

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