

Double-Face Woman

Dorothy B. Mack

They warned me not to dream of her,
Anog-Ite' the Double-Face Woman,
filled us with terror as young girls,
but after my fifth miscarriage
I didn't care.

Let the other women bead
tiny lizards for their babies,
cut cottonwood twigs for childbirth.
I began to dream for *Anog-Ite'*.

I called and called, drank dark
teas, but when she drifted in,
I did not know her
on the right side,
moist lip, bright eye,
for she would not
turn her head.

At last I dreamed fierce
her bone side, reached
right through the black eyesocket
plunged my elbow deep
to pull out all those designs
pricked in the night sky—
quilled whorls and stars—
into my mind.

My arm did not wither
because I did not touch the bone
but I had known darkness
so I was gifted to work
with quills my hand
steady not pierced
by the black barb.

Now in a house no man
may enter we boil dyes
steaming roots bitter
berry red wormwood black
ochre yellow

we weave black barbs
& white shafts
our lips moist swollen
from sucking quills flat
pahin woskapi sucking
medicine

we are fierce
we are childless
men do not bother us

we are sharp
we pierce
we prick

we know the designs

