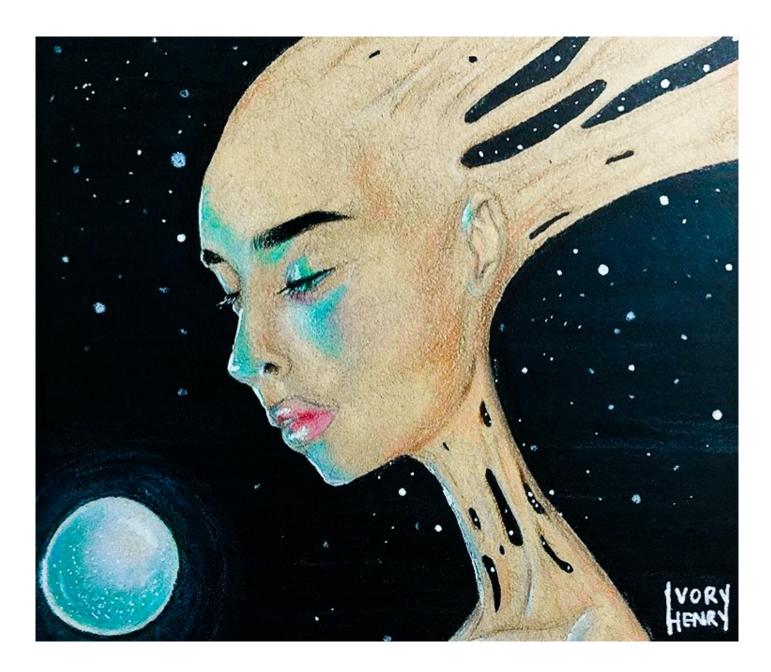
Excommunicate [1]

February 4, 2019 Writing and Faith [2] Poems [3]

Two Poems by Maryanne Hannan



Ellipses

Is there a more full of flowing-with-honey word, other than maybe mellifluous itself? I know,

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because I lip-sync-pray to it every morning, "the long ellipses of the planets," plural of ellipse, an oval

planetary orbit, not that other Greek plural, beware, in this ode to Our Mother, who comes as Mary to me,

but, truth to tell, she's had it with the smarm. Kinda angry, this Mother, who demands moons, meteors, planets return

to her embrace. She's pained, it seems, talks of us, each of us driving the world into an abyss. *Ellipses* depends on how you

say it: plural of ellipse or ellipsis. Could be what's left out. What falls short. Despite our best efforts to fill the void.

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We'll start with the verb. although noun suffix -tion, with its felicitous pronunciation shun—might get us home faster. First off, from the fancy layering of word parts, we know this is no man-on-the-street concoction. Serious business. So abominable a business, in fact, that if it happened to you, you'd be the abomination, anathema, let's just say it—damned for all eternity. No way out. So, o holy men of yore, what root could rise to the challenge? Maybe mun? That's a good guess: a wall where so many of our good ideas begin. Excommunicado, you'd be outside the wall, divided, shunned from all participation in our common enterprise. No mention of all the agony, of writhing you'd be doing afterward. This, you'll be remembering, Galileo's fate. But you'd be wrong. Censured, harassed but never the Big E. Martin Luther, Henry VIII, yes, leaving us centuries, wondering on what side of the wall we should say our Amens. Whew!, you'll think, at least that's over,

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.googlege 2 of 4 analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

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what with Catholics having the walls breached, our ramparts burst night and day. You'd be wrong again: Always someone somewhere whose wall-kicking must be stopped. Meanwhile, facts are facts—the word stinks. Insipid. No punch. Legions of, or as we say, Catholics in droves no longer bother to await the shining light of ecclesial scrutiny. With neither pomp nor circumstance, they voluntarily quit the walls, determined, as some say, to never look back. To free float, fully aware, into the great wall-less beyond.

Art Information

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Maryanne Hannan has published poems in Rattle, Poet Lore, The Minnesota Review, Oxford Poetry, WomenArts Quarterly, Windhover, Christianity and Literature, The Christian Century, Ruminate, and Gargoyle. She has also published in several anthologies, including The Great American Wise Ass Poetry Anthology and The World Is Charged: Poetic Engagements with Gerard Manley Hopkins. A "cradle Catholic" and former Latin teacher, she lives in upstate New York.

Find out more on her Maryanne Hannan's website [4] or follow her on Twitter @Maryanne Hannan [5].

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