

Women

By Louise Bogan

Women have no wilderness in them,
They are provident instead,
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts
To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,
They do not hear
Snow water going down under culverts
Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,
They stiffen, when they should bend.
They use against themselves that benevolence
To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field
Or of clean wood cleft by an axe.
Their love is an eager meaninglessness
Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them
A shout and a cry.
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills
They should let it go by.

n/a

Source: Body of this Death: Poems (1923)



Louise Bogan published most of her poetry before age 40. Her first collection, *Body of this Death*, appeared in 1923 and her sixth, *The Sleeping Fury*, in 1937. Her work is often exactly formal yet intensely personal. She reviewed poetry for the *New Yorker* for 38 years, becoming one of America's most astute critics.

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