Owl Question
Shearin, Faith

Published by Utah State University Press

Shearin, Faith.
Owl Question: Poems.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/9332.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9332
I learned the secrets from a dark smelling book in the old country. I know the shape of wild geese in the sky of my dreams means I will marry more than once. Should rain fall on a blue summer day and the shower is over even as it begins this betokens the luck of a fox’s wedding and any wish I make will come true. I know the new moon is the Bride’s moon, the full moon is Druid, the old moon brings the Nights of Morgana: a darkness, a time of no magic. If I want answers I can slice, blindly, a pair of white ribbons or I can lie down among the owls.

I believe in teacups speaking in leaves, in dreaming cakes made on St. Faith’s Day, in the wisdom of Dove’s eggs and early tulips. Years before my birth my mother fasted all Midsummer’s Eve and, at night, lay a lace cloth near a window. She spread bread and ale on a plate and opened a screened door to the wind. I came into the room: her future daughter, her one true love, and the toast we drank was to a mutual unknown. Later, in a hospital, under lights and drugs, my face swam towards hers like an eel’s and she said she would have known me anywhere. I was not raised in the thin pews of a church. I do not cross myself or fall to my knees with sin; bible stories are too bloody for my liking. But I have loved superstition,
old wives’ tales, any card or potion
that pretends to tell the truth. I know
the truth is anyone’s guess: a white shirt,
if you will, placed on a tree limb before
a fire. On St. Mark’s Eve, as the dusk
closes in, and the dew falls over a nearby
garden, lift your eyes and watch the arms
of the shirt. You will say they are moving,
talking, magically assuming a shape—
the shape of wind, perhaps, or a life.