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Woman and Luna Moth in a Telephone Booth: Late Evening

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Woman and Luna Moth in a Telephone Booth: Late Evening



Photo by Ruth Putter

Carolyn Wright received the doctor of arts in creative writing from Syracuse University in 1977. She has been awarded many poetry prizes and fellowships, and has published poems and translations from the Spanish in numerous journals. Her poetry collections include *Stealing the Children* and *Returning What We Owed*; soon to be published is *Premonitions of an Uneasy Guest* (Hardin-Simmons University Press). Dr. Wright has taught at the University of Washington, Syracuse University, and St. Lawrence University.

The eyes on the wings stare back at her,
dark-ringed, haunting as the kohl-
rimmed eyes of young wives
in the Coptic mummy portraits.

She has come here to make a call
to a part of her life
that may no longer answer.

The moth clings with its furred legs
to the burn-scored edge
of the telephone table, its wings
brittle, two flakes of parchment.

She is trying to compose a message
that contains as much of the truth
as she knows.

Perhaps the green booth light
echoes the shadows under spring leaves,
the green bark to which it clung,
a pupa stirring in a loosening cocoon.

She swallows; she drops a dime in the slot.
It clattered into the coin box.

The moth shudders for the first time.
Its elaborate antennae fan the air,
scanning for signals in a code so ancient
only it can comprehend them.

The voice at the other end of the line
wants her again, agrees with anything,
anything she says . . .

The moon regards her through the smudged glass.
It is not astonished.

The moth grips the table's edge
and trembles.

—Carolyn Wright