

## WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

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J. Paul Hunter, ed. The Norton Introduction to Poetry, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1981.

### USES

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Only the serpent in the dust,  
Wriggling and crawling,  
Grinned an evil grin, and thrust  
His tongue out with its fork.

70

1865

ROB HOLLAND

*Eve in Old Age*

Over her shoulder, the window framed the stars.  
The planets gathered—still, always for her,  
Called out of the dark like thoughts. Venus a green  
Firefly. The erratic pulse, Mars.  
Inside the thoughts themselves gathered, the stir  
Of a few leaves, the light fretful, serene.

The unicorn was not at her elbow now.  
The pomegranate, split in the sudden cold,  
Spilled its red chambers like a heart.<sup>2</sup>  
She remembered it only so, and how  
It was ever other she could not have told.  
She was an old woman. This was God's part.

10

Her sons, once, had filled her like a snail,  
Curled within her, beating like rain  
Against a window. She remembered watching each  
Drive into himself the hooked nail.  
And the nameless daughters, who first had lain  
With them. They watched the days pass without speech.

15

Adam, too, was silent. She could not forget  
His calm weight beside her, as if nothing but light  
Burned on the retina of God's eye.  
There was a fine line where their bodies had met,  
Crossed and yet never crossed. The white  
Moon cut like a scythe across the sky.

20

She dreamed at last of the green skin of the snake,  
In each scale the star, the tree, windless.  
And her own face, scratched there like a mark.  
The snow began to fall, flake by flake  
Gathering the world around her. Transparent, endless,  
The dark passed through her into the dark.

25

1977

2. In Christian iconography (most notably in the Flemish tapestry "The Unicorn in Captivity" in the Cloisters in New York), a unicorn and pomegranate tree

are associated with the *hortus conclusus* (enclosed garden) tradition. The unicorn is a traditional symbol of Christ.

all pachyderms mentioned