

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

*Carolyn Gregory*

### THRICE STRUCK AND HANGED

The spectral evidence was immense:  
girls followed by giant rodents  
down the path,  
legs raised without any reason  
except the willing spirit.

Of course, some would hang  
on Gallow's Hill.  
That old tree held lots of ripe fruit  
when conjuring would not quit.

It was enough to make good families  
quake beneath their collars  
and hide out at prayer tables  
all winter long,  
listening to the good reverend rise  
on his heels,  
threatening the devil among them  
with exorcism and fire.

Thrice struck by lightning  
and marked by heresy,  
the girls flew sideways over Salem  
led by adulturers and worse.

Their words wagged on swollen tongues.  
The judge damned them with the Bible  
and cruel laws.

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**MEETING WHERE DEPARTURES BEGIN**

Past the fast food joints and hubbub,  
around those juggling tickets and lunch,  
your welcoming smile drew me,  
following the zigzag line to your table.

The children suffering by the sea  
with heroin and psychosis,  
our husbands who came and went  
packed up and left  
for Chicago or the mountains.

Where men in business suits  
stalked by, checking departure times,  
we spoke about miracles  
in that busy train station.

You were saved from collisions  
and the loss of your children,  
steered a boat with one hand,  
typing with the other.

The light slanted through glass  
as we traded the devil's country  
for facing the music,  
our native spirits applauding this meeting.