

## Wilderness House Literary Review 5/2

*Carolyn Gregory*

### THE PRINT SHOP

By the time they took her fingerprints,  
she could be immortal,  
her hair hanging down  
to the tiled floor  
as she sits, waiting  
by the giant brass dials  
with levers and hooks  
that lock the vault  
of other fingerprints.

In that damp suite,  
it is always raining  
near the door  
with bars in the basement.  
Bankers' lamps light the way.

No one talks much  
on the splintered bench.  
Each goes through  
a stack of paperwork,  
filling in numbers and dates.  
The waiting goes on  
and on  
past birth and death,  
past signatures scrawled in blood.

THE DYING ART

The spider looked huge  
under full lighting.  
Jointed and hairy near the window,  
she did not move when tapped  
by a stick.  
She was unaffected with the lamp  
switched on and off  
and possibly asleep.

All summer, flies buzzed the screen  
and darted through in search  
of squashed berries.  
Some succeeded  
though others flew into threads  
the spider wrapped in her craft  
of mummy-making.  
White filaments stretched  
small curtains in the window,  
spun for winter dinners.

The spider did not move,  
prodded by sticks or bright lamps.  
Possibly poisonous,  
when she was off guard,  
a shoe pressed down.  
She vanished without blood  
or a scream  
though her work remained  
stitched and rigorous,  
all her webs intentional  
and latticed.