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"in shapes of shifting lineage"

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"in shapes of shifting lineage"

Abstract

from a line by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Ever notice when you've had a bad night
it seems you had a bad childhood, too.

I was born in a gulag. A guard stabbed me
with a flute, made me whistle out my life

Keywords

childhood, girl, woman, poem



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“in shapes of shifting lineage”

by Brendan Constantine,

from a line by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Ever notice when you've had a bad night
it seems you had a bad childhood, too.

I was born in a gulag. A guard stabbed me
with a flute, made me whistle out my life

in a national song. By noon, my mother
was a nun, later a chorus girl from Minsk.

At four the sun began to exaggerate; I went
from a girl to a woman in a freight car

rattling someway west. Got home about ten,
called my stalker, said I was alone. Last

I fed the fish, watched them eat

every cloud. Slept like a hostage.

Brendan Constantine is a poet based in Hollywood. His collection, Letters To Guns, is available from Red Hen Press. He is currently poet-in-residence at The Windward School and Loyola Marymount University Extension. Mr. Constantine also conducts poetry workshops for children's hospitals, foster care centers, and with the Alzheimer's Poetry project.

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