

## **Plain**

She's not plain while the bird sings.  
Frozen womanhood under her Quaker hat.

A buckled ribbon decorates her hair  
cut in a cropped line direct to God.

Her modest collar shields her bosom.  
Her hand says yes while the bird sings

to the caged heart in her dress.

On her thumb in a gesture not timid,  
a rope of beads. She's not at prayer.

Her eyes caution the bird: I'm not free  
to dance and sing. We're tame at home.

Her listening is not to a carol or hymn.

The bird and she share a woodland tryst,  
boldness beneath her skin, in the cupid

bow mouth. The puritan fears the devil  
who never rests. Her eyes say no and

her lips say yes while the bird sings.

*S.J. Litherland*

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