

**Martin Robertson**

**Eugénie de Guérin**

She hung out of her window to watch the stars.  
They hustled her back to bed with cries and prayers  
and nailed the window shut.  
A man in the woven hanging reached for a nest.  
Each morning when she woke she could bear it less  
—found scissors and cut  
the offending hand away. More punishment.  
They loved her though (as she loved them) and meant  
well. She grew up *dévoté*  
but kind and wise, with the wisdom of innocence,  
total faith in an ordered universe  
breathed from the will of God  
which set the peasant to labour and not question  
and her to tread, and equally not question,  
her narrow barren road.

Loves children, could have been a loving wife.  
Would have been bride, with greater love, of Christ,  
but stays with her father  
who needs her, loves her, whom she loves too; stays  
with sister and brother she loves too in their ways  
but not with the brother  
she loves above all the world, though not above  
God—God for her is truly Love—  
but above all others:  
the baby brother she first was jealous of,  
but they were knitted together in lasting love  
before their mother  
died, when he was eight, she was thirteen.  
And now the loved brother lives in Babylon,  
Paris, leagues away. And further.

He has left the walled garden of Faith, walks  
anywhere wilful thought may lead. She looks  
out from the green shade  
passionately fearing for his soul's health (fearing  
for his body's too, mortally sick) yet sharing  
still with warm loving pride  
his thoughts and hopes, sharing with him her hopes  
(few in this world), her thoughts, giving them shape  
in clear, beautiful words.  
For this they share, as well as their love: love  
of the expressive, the living word, of  
poetry. She made  
—of sewing, cooking, correspondence, the road to the mill  
with its flowers, birds in the garden—made her journal  
a sampler that does not fade.