

The Space

Margaret Summerside

I am tired.

I am so tired.

and there is just one space left in the bunk

No more than a cot on the floor,

equal to the cockroaches of the corners and lesser than the spiders of the ceiling

But I crave it, I yearn for it

I picture the weight of my useless body

Crushing the small space as I drift to another universe

But there is a man there

He stands next to the space

looking at its emptiness,

its availability

My eyelids droop, my legs hardly able to close the distance

between myself and the man

“Excuse me” I whisper to the man, “may I use this space?”

“Oh, I’m sorry, no” replies the man “I’ve already claimed it”

I look around, my dry eyes searching

Weary as I turn back to the man

He seems to have forgotten me

Focused again on the space

Still he stands

My head reels, my limbs filling with sand

Why will he not lie down?

I fantasize

Of how I would use the space, properly and fully

How I would surrender to the deepest sleep

Succumb to the delusions of slumber
The body that space deserves is my own
Yet the space is empty
Yet the man stands

“Excuse me sir, but are you going to use this space?” I desperately slur
“I am” says the man
And the man stands

“I’ll pay you” I plead “how much for this space?”
Again, the man seems to have forgotten I am there
Staring at the space
“please, how much?”

“I’m sorry”
the man replies
“I’ve claimed this space”

He stands.