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The Lady of Shalott in 2020
Rachael Mead

The grand architecture of the world
has shrunk to my fence-line
and places I love call out in thin voices
as if locked in distant rooms.

My days unspool in a single stretch
of light, stained only by the ordinary
miracles of cloud track, voice mote
and the thump and drag of blood.

My mind is the bathroom mirror
after a shower. It's not death or curse
or loneliness I fear. It's forgetting who I am.
A woman in love with the wild.

Each day I knot words onto pages, trace
the path of the planet by the cedar's shadow,
study the syntax of birds. Curling toes in the grass,
I dream the history of this place layering down

to its dark core – molten and churning.
In the old world, enchanted by light and quiet,
I was not in love with people. Yet here I am, half-sick
of shadows. The night rides in. The stars keep

their distance. I sit alone, gazing out at the world
through the glass but see nothing. No passing knight.
No bearded meteor. No broad stream complaining
in its banks. Just my reflection cracked from side to side.

Rachael Mead

Rachael Mead is a writer and arts reviewer living in South Australia. Awarded the 2019 Australian Poetry and Nature, Art & Habitat Residency Eco-Poetry Fellowship in Northern Italy, she is published widely and the author of several collections of poetry, including *The Flaw in the Pattern* (UWA Publishing, 2018). Her debut novel *The Application of Pressure* has just been published by Affirm Press (2020).