

Return of the Spider Mother

after Louise Bourgeois

You don't have to be cloistered
in a darkened room, crouched over a candle,
to summon her. You don't have
to make a scene, smash crockery or draw
any attention to yourself.

Only allow your anxiety to grow,
spiralling out of you in lines
that cover the walls of white corridors,
and outside are skeins of a broken web
caught on a barbed wire fence.

She knows that you need her,
picked up on your distress signal,
her eyes snapping open,
head swivelling on its smooth gears.
You've waited long enough.

Listen out for her spiked heels
clacking over the flagstones towards you.
Be ready to hold out your arms. Together
you'll rise as high as a steeple, steadied
on pincers locked into the pavement cracks.

She will come back. She's on her way,
the good mother, the fierce mother.
With her needle and thread, she'll repair
all that came undone,
the sky, your lacerated heart.

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