

Le Fuzzy Femme

Please believe me when I say
that this particular tarantula
was a sweet slip of a classy lady.

She tiptoed her way into our room gently,
not wanting to wake either one of us up,
and when she saw that both of the beds were taken,
she humbly spun herself up into the hammock
that was slung up sideways along the wall.

She didn't take up too much space,
didn't talk too much or ever complain.
She just swallowed up all the scarier bugs,
the disease-needled greedy mosquitoes,
the worms that tickled up under our toes,
the flies that burrow
and the flies that bite
and the flies that just tap dance shiver up our skin
in their ballet slippers of human excrement.

No, she wasn't like them—
she had standards and manners.
When Abi slung the hammock
carelessly over her shoulder,
knocking all the tarantula's cross-stitch handiwork
right off the wall of her disrupted nest,
she didn't protest,
didn't scream or call names or ask for blood.
She only lifted a finger to tap Abi's shoulder
ever so slightly,
coughing under her breath
the most hesitant, "Excuse me."

And when Abi threw her into the dirt
as if she hadn't earned all her room and board,
she paused first for a photo,
elegant in the pedicure of her dainty pink toes,

then tucked up the delicate fur of her skirt
and sashayed her way back into the bushes
exactly as if she were headed downtown
to take in the theatre,

as if she were Cinderella
and we the prince so blind

that we don't recognize her beauty
in plain sight.