

Virgins and Whores by Maria Garcia Teutsch

5:30 *Rise*

Bones creak
as feet slide
into cotton slippers,
movement of bodies hum
like moths eating white wool.

6:00 *The Angelus (Lauds)*

Blessed art thou
Lady of Shadows
long suffering,
perfect pain,
your womb an echo
canyon for the lost.

6:20 *Prayer (An Hour)*

Forgive the lust that eats away
the soul like rust
on a tin watering can.
She longs to touch
the callus on the hand
of the gardener who cuts
the calla lillies
and offers her a bouquet.

7:20 *Great Silence Ends*

Words form on lips,
speckled stones
dropping into lakes
of sound.

8:00 *Conventual Mass*

The Virgen Santissima de Guadalupe

in painted squares, a mosaic:
stars on her, mirrored
by the sea, she is sky;
creeping golden vines on her
burnt sienna dress, she is earth.

8:45 *Eucharist (Thanksgiving)*

For the hummingbird
who stares questions
and twists her neck to show
a ruby hiding there.

9:00 *Breakfast*

The egg cracks,
like the purple coneflowers
crushed between palms,
seeds broadcast
on salty wind.

9:30 *Manual Work*

She weeds roses until her nails
are blackened half moons.
She whispers
their names: Peace,
Sheer Bliss, Rhapsody.

At the bottom of the monastery
a beach: divers suit up like black seals,
artists with easels upon sand
paint the yellow monastery.

Noon (*Sext*)

Hymns in honor of our Lady
the ever-virginal mother.

3:00 *Prayers for the Dying*

Tears form an apricot pit
in the throat.

5:00 *Prayer*

A prayer for the brother
who drinks from 2:00 to 8:00 pm
and on the seventh day rests.

Brown eyes once clear
now tarnished by thunder
that haunts his sleep.

6:00 *Evening Prayer*

For the mother
whose bitterness is uncooked
chocolate, the wafer
one cannot swallow.

7:30 *Recreation*

Braids hair like
a rosary, copper snakes
around sandpaper fingers.

8:30 (*Matins*) Night prayer

Knees creak on a pew
of stars. Shoots arrows
at the moon, climbs
to the place where she thinks
her sigh escapes God's notice.

9:10 *Great Silence Begins*