

## The Marble Bed

**Grace Schulman**

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She is the author of eight collections of poetry and a memoir, and the long arc of Grace Schulman's stellar writing career reminds us of the labor involved in a single poem, never finished, still in need of a little fiddling. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and winner of the Frost Medal for Distinguished Lifetime Achievement in American Poetry, she teaches at CUNY's Baruch College.

Francesca Redux

That day we read no further.

*In the beginning, there was the book:  
the type, the smell of glue, the grainy paper,  
fingertips caressing a stiff spine*

*that lay flat, the leather cover  
crinkled like warm arms, pages fanning open,  
stanzas quivering in candlelight,*

*nouns with open vowels that slid off the tongue,  
the wait, the unending sentence with pleasure  
delayed. Book, whirl us in wind,*

*mysterious as marriage, joining words  
that had lain apart. After the daily  
hoarse falsetto of an alarm clock,*

*cracked wineglasses and bickering neighbors,  
we'll read at night, holding the gilt-edged leaves,  
the texts, the bindings that enclose us.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (November / December 2020)

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