

## Two Poems by Eileen Sagar

### VIGILS : ABBEY OF GETHSEMANI

It's cold in the church  
At three am.  
Painted bricks, row on row  
On row on row.  
Flint pebbles set in concrete floor.  
Narrow nave, long and high.  
Grey winds in the rafters.

No light.  
No warmth yet from morning sun.  
No birds rustle in the nest.  
In the ginkgo tree  
No insect stirs.  
Not even the Mantis prays  
In the monastery bush.

Paint on brick on row on row;  
Pebbles set in concrete floor.  
Grizzled, stubble-heads  
Of unshaven monks,  
Bleary-eyed, yawning, cold,  
Stumble in uncertain greyness.  
Shuffle into pre-set places.

No bell tolls for this hour  
Of noiseless night  
To waken living or the dead  
From earthen grave or solitary bed.  
Crisp hoarfrost on blade and leaf;  
Undisturbed  
Frozen silence.

Then sounds of sudden sibilant sweetness  
Praising Father, Son and Spirit,  
Now and forever.  
(Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor)  
Grey melts into silver  
Warms into yellow,  
Bursts into golden glorious song  
To the end of the ages.



## HERMIT HOUSE IN THE WOODS

One soft and damp November day  
I went into the woods to pray  
And found an empty moth cocoon that hung beneath a tree.  
An empty shell, the moth flown on,  
Flow on, long gone, its curving soulshape left for me to see.

I went within to rest at noon,  
(it's grey inside a moth cocoon).  
No cattle shed held such simplicity,  
Hanging there upon the tree,  
The door ajar for ants and bees who come and go like me.

Shalom inscribed beside the door.  
Hard, cold and concrete-grey the floor.  
Icons hanging still upon the wall in this your prayer stall,  
Altar sweet and smelling yet of  
Cedarwood and linen cloths and poverty's brown pall.

One thing for which I am most grateful, is this cocoon, he said.  
In here I grew in silence,  
Warmth and woodsmoke filling nook and niche.

Solitary creature, spread your wings and fly;  
Leave your nest to die, reborn a butterfly.

Enter, moth, be one, be all, be blest.  
We must become what we already are.  
The starkness of your Bethlehem  
Is the grandeur of my eucharist.