

Columbia

by Joan Noëldchen

I know what it is to be

In a room without locks

On the door and a nine-thirty curfew,

All I could do is curl up in my bed

And listen to the sounds of police sirens coming from the street, five floors below

The hospital has sounds at night. The nurses and attendants catch a breath between tasks. There is always movement and lights in the hallways.

I must keep my cool sanity in a psych ward. I must give the correct responses to others.

When I am alone at night, I am with God in reality.

I am strangely calm until I pass the entrance. I am kept like an animal on display.

Miracles await after a rain. The colors run from the clouds. My covenant is in the sky. I hang on to hope after the bow fades and the sun appears.