

## Poems by Margot Wizansky

**Margot Wizansky** is a finalist in the Inkwell Competition and has also received third prize in the American Literary Review Poetry Competition. Margot is a long time member of PoemWorks. Her two winning poems follow.

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*The Inkwell prize, judged by Ellen Voigt:*

### **AT THE ABBEY OF RETIRED NUNS**

Blesséd are the apricot trees, bowed down  
under the weight of glory, the fruit itself

a kind of adoration, the weeping sweet intensity,  
skin soft as an earlobe, radiant, the wall

spiked with shards, rustle of gabardine, austerity,  
everything considered with reverence.

In the graveyard of the nuns, their hearts shrouded,  
marked by white cards nailed to wooden stakes,

row upon row of wooden stakes.  
Night draws in, milky blue, measured as plainsong.

I know little of devotion, the stations of the breath.  
*This is not your poem, say the stones.*

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*American Literary Review, judged by Cate Marvin:*

### **DIRGE FOR THE ARTIST**

fear bleached the sky bone-white, turned blood black  
after the war he began to paint with charcoal  
to comprehend the imperative of war, he painted  
canvas after canvas blackened with ash

after the war he began to paint with charcoal—  
a form of ash, smeared and rubbed and scratched away  
canvas after canvas blackened with ash,  
he stepped back, stepped back to see what he'd exhumed—

forms of ash, smeared and rubbed and scratched away  
carboned, sooty, smudged with his work,  
he stepped back, stepped back to see what he'd exhumed—  
gaunt and minimal, fused flanks of the near-dead

carboned, sooty, smudged with his work:  
disgrace hanging hollow, slight as burnt sticks,  
gaunt and minimal, fused flanks of the near-dead  
and after the war, he did not return to color

disgrace hanging hollow, slight as burnt sticks—  
to comprehend the imperative of war, he painted  
after the war, and he could not return to color—  
fear bleached the sky bone-white; blood turned black