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### Two Poems by Maryanne Hannan



### Ellipses

Is there a more full of flowing-with-honey word,  
other than maybe mellifluous itself? I know,

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(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){if('GoogleAnalyticsObject'===r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){(i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1\*new Date();a=s.createElement(o),m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m)})(window,document,'script','<https://www.google.com/analytics.com/analytics.js>','ga'); ga('create','UA-18260536-1','auto'); ga('send','pageview');

because I lip-sync-pray to it every morning, “the long ellipses of the planets,” plural of ellipse, an oval

planetary orbit, not that other Greek plural, beware, in this ode to Our Mother, who comes as Mary to me,

but, truth to tell, she’s had it with the smarm. Kinda angry, this Mother, who demands moons, meteors, planets return

to her embrace. She’s pained, it seems, talks of us, each of us driving the world into an abyss. *Ellipses* depends on how you

say it: plural of ellipse or ellipsis. Could be what’s left out. What falls short. Despite our best efforts to fill the void.

## Excommunicate

We’ll start with the verb,  
although noun suffix *-tion*,  
with its felicitous pronunciation—  
*shun*—might get us home faster.  
First off, from the fancy layering  
of word parts, we know this is no  
man-on-the-street concoction. Serious  
business. So abominable a business,  
in fact, that if it happened to you,  
you’d be the abomination, anathema,  
let’s just say it—damned for all eternity.  
No way out. So, o holy men of yore,  
what root could rise to the challenge?  
Maybe *mun*? That’s a good guess: a wall  
where so many of our good ideas begin.  
Excommunicado, you’d be  
outside the wall, divided, shunned  
from all participation in our common  
enterprise. No mention of all the agony,  
of writhing you’d be doing afterward.  
This, you’ll be remembering, Galileo’s  
fate. But you’d be wrong. Censured,  
harassed but never the Big E. Martin  
Luther, Henry VIII, yes, leaving us  
centuries, wondering on what side of  
the wall we should say our Amens.  
Whew!, you’ll think, at least that’s over,

what with Catholics having the walls  
breached, our ramparts burst night  
and day. You'd be wrong again:  
Always someone somewhere  
whose wall-kicking must be stopped.  
Meanwhile, facts are facts—the word  
stinks. Insipid. No punch. Legions of,  
or as we say, Catholics in droves  
no longer bother to await the shining light  
of ecclesial scrutiny. With neither pomp  
nor circumstance, they voluntarily quit  
the walls, determined, as some say,  
to never look back. To free float, fully  
aware, into the great wall-less beyond.

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### Art Information

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Maryanne Hannan has published poems in *Rattle*, *Poet Lore*, *The Minnesota Review*, *Oxford Poetry*, *WomenArts Quarterly*, *Windhover*, *Christianity and Literature*, *The Christian Century*, *Ruminate*, and *Gargoyle*. She has also published in several anthologies, including *The Great American Wise Ass Poetry Anthology* and *The World Is Charged: Poetic Engagements with Gerard Manley Hopkins*. A "cradle Catholic" and former Latin teacher, she lives in upstate New York.

Find out more on her [Maryanne Hannan's website](#) [4] or follow her on Twitter [@Maryanne\\_Hannan](#) [5].

## Excommunicate

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