

ONE, TWO, THREE

Lilian Symons

One stood at the door and sang the hours sweetly in the waiting,
With minuetted grace in the still air, in the silent honeycomb,
Through the timeless chasm, unknowing, chiming the hours with delicate precision,
As if the shaggy outbeyond were still alive and prescient
With waxy candles of pumpkin flowers lazily sun-burning
To catch hieratic bees in somnolent magic,
With rainy iridescence of a thousand rainbows moonlighting the lawn,
With colonnades upthrust.
One stood at the door and sang the hours sweetly in the waiting.

Two, smiling with infinite patience, sat at the monolithic desk in the slumbertime
Green plastic posture chair balanced with nicety on the shining parquet,
In the hush, in the frozen cameraclick,
As if the flesh were quick and eager,
As if the fists of hearts clenched and unclenched with desire, with heavy wanting,
With the slow mad willknow.
Two sat at the patient desk in the slumbertime.

Three lay in the iron-chambered foetal nest through the light years,
Waiting in the terrible vacuum for the inevitable count down,
Poised on the nothingverge in indestructible pressure suit,
As if sinewy power surged and tugged at the instruments,
As if red green eyes of electricity flashed in the wall panels
With indomitable strength
And forgotten Vulcan spanned the dead air with iron sparks.
Three lay in the iron chamber through the light years.

And out in the void the inner stars flamed,
Tracing with consummate dignity their tiny orbits against the universe,
Not caring that Univac was silent,
That the word was gone on an arrow shot downwind into the dead reeds,
That the bones of the house were bleached and sterile.
And out in the void the stars flamed to their waning.