

Hanged Man

by Marisa P. Clark

Another *nuit blanche*
brought on by late autumn's lengthening dark and drop
in temperature,

the comforter
too hot, the top sheet too thin, and also the trouble
of what to do

with my hands,
in particular the right palm inflamed with the brand
of her touch, its heat

that can scorch
bare skin, and though the left can settle where it lands,
the asymmetry

disturbs. I prop
both palms on fingertips to hover like tents above
my hipbones. One

problem solved, and now
I find a leg's drawn up, rough sole to thigh, as in the Arabic
numeral 4, as in

the yoga pose
called Tree, as in the position of the Tarot's Hanged Man.
How I resent

the inaccurate past
participle when clearly he's alive and present tense, head bright
with thought, and curiously

peaceful. Like me, he's been left
dazzled, upside-down, in suspense and actively hanging, wide
awake with waiting. This month

makes a year. If she
were here and warm with sleep, what worries would assail me?
There's no guarantee

life would be better
or less lonely. White nights might multiply. I straighten my leg
in the sheets' cold

embrace, and I

wait, I keep waiting, to slip this chain of misspent thoughts
and cut the light.