

# Commentary on three lunulae, truro museum

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Three Lunulae, Truro Museum is a poem written by Penelope Shuttle and it is written with the perspective of a person who visits a museum and views the Lunulae. The visitor, upon first seeing the Lunulae begins to imagine their history. The gender of the viewer is unknown but it seems to be a woman, given the gentle and delicate way of writing, shown through the first stanza “gold so thin, only an old woman would notice its weight”. The poem consists of 14 stanzas but varies in length probably contributing to a shift in mood and tone of the poem.

The poem begins with the description of the Lunulae as soon as the visitor walks in where they comment on the gold on the Lunulae and that it was so thin only an old woman would notice it, creating imagery in our mind about how fine and delicate the Lunulae is and therefore, adding to the speakers intrigue towards the object. This description continues in the second stanza where she compares the gold to crescent moons that came out of the “sunken district of the dark”. This comparison probably tells us how the Lunulae were found after the “archaeologists” dug it out of the ground.

This gets the poet to start describing the ornaments and how the women of the Bronze Age “threw no barbaric shadows” which seems like a connection with the Bronze age and how it may have been a time of violence. The reference to “freeze” in stanza five and “winter” links to a seasonal recurrence where spring probably represents the young people and that winter symbolizes doom, old age and eventually: death. Contrasting to this description, the poet uses a lot of delicate and gentle sounds such as moon, women and mood to probably ease out the process, almost as if it was a cyclic movement.

When the speaker describes these ornaments, it's as though time stands still while she is entranced by the ornaments but the mention of the "slight quick tap of a clock" (stanza 6), the reader is reminded that time still exists and that it waits for no one. This idea is supported by the previous mentions of the moon and the women of the Bronze Age where the speaker describes the event almost as if she were back in time with them and that it stood still when she spoke about it.

In stanza 5, the reference to insects' legs is quite an odd simile to use but it conveys the fact that the clock's hand, is like an insect's leg, quiet and unseen, almost as if it goes on unspoken till we meet our end, or when it is winter. The next few lines only add to the intrigue of the speaker towards the object where she tries to see what others could not see. She wants to go beyond the three women's faces and actually understand the story behind the Lunulae. The reference to the word "sickle shapes" along with "insects' legs" and "thin gold remains of autumn" show the delicate and fragile imagery with a link to nature.

In stanza 9, there is a possible connection to stanza 3 and in this stanza, the women seem to be appearing in front of the speaker, almost in a ghost-like form with "a face like a frost fern". The description here is very dark and aggressive. The "Light twists in a violent retching" and this shows the manner in which the women are manifesting themselves. In contrast to what was said earlier in stanza three, it seems now that these women did have a violent past. The "dusty snakes" which are used to describe the women implies that they are very old and possess a sly character.

Towards the end, the readers understand that the custodian is about to close the museum and this intriguing story behind the Lunulae is about to come to an end. The speaker must leave as they are closing. The speaker's friend waits there to buy him a postcard and they both step outside where there are autumn leaves. This reference to the autumn leaves touches up upon the previous mentions of seasons, time and how life is almost like a cyclic movement: pre planned and inevitable.

The poet tries to convey to us that every single thing has its own story, its own identity and that every thing we do in life connects us to events in the past and the future. This poem conveys the importance of time and how it is destructive in nature where at one point, everything seems fine but after a while, things tend to fall apart and ugly truths begin to reveal themselves. It teaches us that the mind is very fragile and gullible but explains to us that what is shown on the surface is not always the truth.