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## Thirteen Ways of Looking

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## Thirteen Ways of Looking

### Description

A poem in reference to Wallace Stephens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

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# THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING

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GRACE KOHLER

1.  
Thirteen is perverse.  
Curses unto all enemies, foreign and domestic.

2.  
I was of thirteen minds  
like warring tribes  
plus Manasseh

3.  
Green curves like  
eternity cut short in half  
preceded by a white line –  
13

4.  
Nightdream in the midmorning, daymare after  
twilight. Fridays were perfectly good except for the  
afternoon's blackout. The elm tree sinks its shallow  
roots and sends its shoots to swallow up the dark-  
ness with its own black ink blood.

5.  
the feminine an anathema  
the moon was always a lady  
thirteen cycles, once in a blood moon

6.  
I never read The Thirteenth Pearl  
though I love Carolyn Keene mysteries.  
She always had a hidden chamber  
behind the door of her name.

7.  
The thirteenth day of the  
thirteenth month, my favorite  
The midnight rays of clouds  
flower the lakes  
and the foxes sing in the trees  
to ward off blackbirds.

8.

A man and woman  
are one. A boy and a girl  
are two. And thirteen.

9.

a state of thirteen Limbos  
and adolescence  
holiness unperfected

10.

plus three equals thirteen,  
doubled sevens minus twice  
a half. someone's a third wheel.

11.

Oh men of Apollo,  
why do you dream of thirteen moons?  
Do you not see the earth about your feet?

12.

Bakers can't count because  
a baker's dozen is thirteen –  
one to test if the batch is poisoned  
with too much salt or arsenic, crumbling  
over your shoulder into a circle,  
chocolate chips melting through the wood.

13.

I know dusty legends  
of thirteen dancers.  
But I know too,  
that one of them is me.