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## At the Duomo, Orvieto, Italy

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Morris: At the Duomo, Orvieto, Italy

## At the Hotel Duomo, Orvieto, Italy

I haven't figured out the art on the wall  
of my hotel room. In the dim light  
seeping between heavy drapes  
I see only outlines.

Maybe it's a pollywog, I tell myself,  
like the ones that swam the creek  
I played in as a child. If I come back  
next year, it may have morphed  
into a frog. I will listen for its croak  
at dusk, let it lull me to sleep.

But, no, I think, it is a balloon let loose  
on a windy day, the string floating out  
behind it. The currents must be strong  
to send it flying so fast the string  
is almost horizontal. It may sail into a tree  
or over the duomo, beyond the hill  
on which Orvieto stands, even beyond  
the homes and vineyards in the valley below.

I turn on one side, still able to see  
the tailed circle. Then I know: it is one sperm  
ready to impregnate the egg of an idea,  
one idea seeking a mate with which to merge,  
placed here to serve as muse  
for a seminal thought in the night  
when I should be sleeping.  
I reach for my pen.

But, alas, when I turn on the light, I see  
the tail is no tail, no string. It ends  
in an arrowhead pointing away  
from the bloated circle. I'm back where I started  
in the dark, no hint of the artist's intent,  
but with an added conundrum, a question  
whether a reader will say the same thing  
about these lines scribbled in bed,  
half awake, half in a dream.

*Wilda Morris*