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To the Morning

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"To the Morning"

my feet in the grass forget their dignity and
nestle in the dew like cat's paws.

—Pat Bridges

THE CURSE OF A NECESSITY: ART

One subtle theme of Homer's *Iliad* centers on the human need for art and beauty. Homer examines the relationship between art, beauty, and necessity—as both a curse and a necessity. The story begins with an argument concerning the goddesses:

Each of the goddesses is jealous of the others and the most beautiful of the three. Zeus wisely stays the goddesses to Alexandros (Paris, a prince of Troy). Ironically, Paris chooses Aphrodite, the Goddess of beauty. Aphrodite has promised Paris the fairest woman in the world to choose her, and (2) Paris wants to avoid the war by accepting Hera's or Athena's bribe. With this choice begins the Trojan war and for Homer's *Iliad*.

Paris' choice presents one of the symbols of the main curse and blessing of a necessity in the epic. She represents erotic love and beauty. Helen's beauty is a symbol of the war. The Trojans and the Greeks fight not only for a woman, but also because of her beauty. The cosmos also sits on the tower of Troy watching the battles:

...and watching Helen as she climbed the tower in the undertones they said to one another:

"We cannot rage at her, it is no wonder that Trojans and Achaeans under arms should for so long have borne the pain for one like this."

"Unearthliness. A girl, all the woman is to look at."

"Ah, but still, still, even so, being all that she is, and take her scourge from us and from..."