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The Visible Woman: Poems About Sarah Winchester, Victorian Heiress to the Rifle
Fortune

Abstract

With the recent increase in academic and societal interest in poetry books that reimagine historical figures and events, my second manuscript, *The Visible Woman*, extends this trend by exploring the story of Sarah Winchester, Victorian heiress to the rifle fortune, and the bizarre and purportedly haunted 6-acre house she built in California, as well Winchester sharpshooters, ghosts, war widows, and other “visible” women. Using poetry’s formal and metaphoric capacities, these poems interweave fact and legend, engaging questions of social visibility and invisibility, collective guilt, femininity, violence, and other topics.

With a first draft of approximately half the manuscript and publication of some of these poems in well-respected journals, I am seeking support for key primary research into Sarah’s story, as well as dedicated writing time to integrate this research into revisions and new poems. Having spent three years working mostly from secondary sources, I have encountered a number of questions that I propose researching in the History San Jose Archives, Stanford library, and the Winchester House. I will then spend a month working from this research to revise poems and draft new ones, which I will submit to journals, in anticipation of submitting the full manuscript to presses and contests.