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### Poem by Susan Terris



## Flight Risk: Dementia

Published on Talking Writing (<https://talkingwriting.com>)

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## Flight Risk: Dementia

Her husband, deep in dementia, with a child's mind  
in a man's body, shoves her against the wall. Not that he

Before she knows what's happening, it happens.

his weight and muscle, as he tries to wrench  
the phone from her hand. It's dark. She sees birds then,

hits her but uses restraint. She's pinned there by

echoes with breathy chirps. She sees blood, a broken body,  
hers pushed down from a great height. Panicked, she

finches, helpless before a feral tomcat, and the air

in the bathroom. As he throws himself against  
the door and claws at it, she calls their son for help.

bites the back of his hand, twists free, locks herself

and in the dark air around her, no longer finches,  
but blackbirds screeching, dive-bombing, trying—

The only light is the small glow of her cell,

to peck holes in her brain, too.

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### Art Information

1. "[Freak](#)" [4] © Jill Slaymaker; used by permission.



ng—and trying

Susan Terris's most recent book is *Ghost of Yesterday: New and Selected Poems* (Marsh Hawk Press). She is the author of six books of poetry, sixteen chapbooks, three artist's books, and one play. Her journal publications include the *Southern Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Talking Writing*, and *Ploughshares*. A poem of hers from *Field* appeared in *Pushcart Prize XXXI*.

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She's editor of *Spillway Magazine*. Her chapbook *Memos* was published by Omnidawn in 2015, and a poem from this book was selected for *Best American Poetry 2015*. Omnidawn will publish her book *Take Two: Film Studies* in 2017.

For more information, visit [Susan Terris's website](#). [5]

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