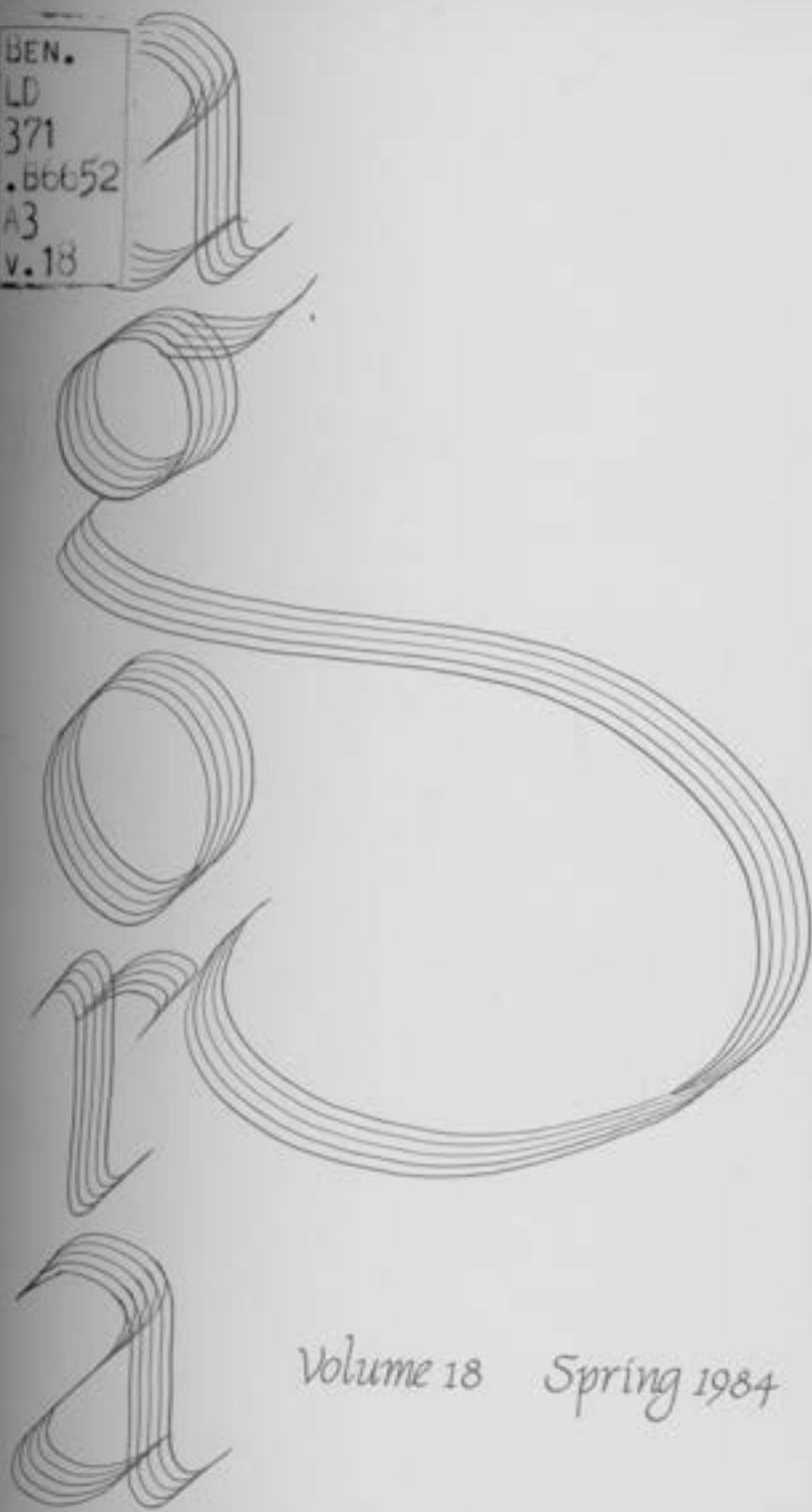


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(Cover design by Susan Render)

REFORESTATION

Choose land left behind,
rolled over, scraped clean,
up hollows, or damned near
vertical; anything too far
from the highway
to be seen. Go
down and hide with it,
warm the seeds
like a hen, adopt
the patience of stones.

They will come,
slow as humility,
older than torment,
or haste, or the sad stare
of one befuddled century.
Branch over branch
shall again rise around you,
the strong haze of pines,
the shadows.

—Russell Fowler

AUDREY OF LAURELEDGE

Audrey,
like a Connecticut hill, your brow
bows beneath white cumulus hair;
and, in 30 years, your eyes sky only
deeper azure,
Audrey, I,
come for an hour,
stay on:

not because Snowdrop,
your 11-year-old cat,
died today (*If ever I
needed you, it's now,*
you choked hello);;

not because 4 hours with you give
me back myself, young (the no fear/
no favor reporter you made room for),
lost girl, whose ideals and dreams,
with no sun, stunted, rotted into
menopausal stumps;;

Audrey,
I stay on in your house of glass
where outdoor-laurel, reflected,
espaliers indoor-mirror-walls,
because though the unliving
(figures made by 93-year-old
Lady Rentsch) patrol your book-
case ledge while living gnarled
woods encircles, guards,

I stay,
Audrey,
because surviving this long
lapse, elephant-hearted we know,
there is no escape —
not even bark (Daphne beat us
to it) —
from the Apollo-pursuer, lovesick-
Death.

—Grace DiSanto

THE EXILE

Tell me in another language
" go " and I will,
because I cannot reason now ;
I will in another language
promise to return .
Eyes drenched with layers
of nostalgia —
broken earth, burning heat,
crowds — rich and poor,
make my days,
my nights, hollow .
I weep ; I know
I will not return .
There is no intimacy
in this faceless land .
Emotionless, I listen :
I cannot hear my father,
say his prayers at dawn,
nor touch my mother's
soft and wrinkled face ;
I hear the pain ;
and in another language
pray — I will return .

—Veda Doss

A YOUNG MAN IN FLORENCE

He had been exceptionally drunk the night before. The heavy red wines and syrupy liquors now felt, to say the least, oppressive. What was needed this early afternoon, he thought, was an inspiration, some kind of clean, stark, self-evident vision or event, a reason to go on. A carefree walk through the streets would not be enough; besides, he knew he would probably just settle into a cafe at the nearest quiet piazza and drink a meal or two. He didn't need that. Not again.

Mario had suggested a small museum, away from the crowds. Perhaps the Accademia down Via Ricasoli would do. At least he wouldn't have to cross the Ponte Vecchio where the French and American kids sold bad art for something to smoke. Besides "The David" the Academy housed several unfinished Michaelangelo sculptures and some very nice sixteenth and seventeenth century tapestries. Mario encouraged the venture as he had been worried about the whole situation. So, after bread and three brisk capuccinos (and still hungover) he headed out. He wondered as he walked if any of the young deMedicis had ever become this oblivious to such a magnificent city. The sun was too hot and the Fiats were like termites stuffing themselves in cobblestone furrows. The stench of the backstreets made him weak. So he returned to Ricasoli, making his way to the Piazza San Marco, just a few blocks from the Academy. There he found a table in the shade and ordered another capuccino. It didn't work. He was shaking inside. A familiar surge of anxiety ran up through his body. He ordered two double Bloody Marys, guzzled the first, sipped the second as he read the baseball scores in the American paper from Paris, and then capped it off with a Tia Maria toasting (to himself) the waiter, the Mets, and Michaelangelo.

The building was marked only by a bronze plate, discreet and appropriate, he thought. He entered, gave one more well groomed Italian in one more baggy uniform his 1500 lire, and ambled a few steps to the entranceway of a large corridor with high arched ceilings. Along the walls adorned with the colorful tapestries were the unfinished sculptures, titled collectively "The Captives." He stopped abruptly at one called in English "The Awakening Giant." It was magnificent. The chiseled, rough marble seemed to be growing around a figure. Or was the figure emerging from the stone? A large, muscular leg grew along the line of marble but then folded back into it. Of the other leg only the thigh was visible. The figure's genitals were not featured distinctly but hung down from an abdomen and lay across a thigh perfectly detailed. One arm was bent at the elbow and the muscular tension made it look as if it were trying desperately to free itself from the block. The neck and head were tilted back and to the side as if frozen in

the last agonizing moment of a dream. He was dumbfounded. He stepped up to the work, slowly placed his fingers just under one breast, and felt a strong pulse throb almost embarrassing as when one is forced to hold a stranger's hand. His head dropped and he continued down the corridor.

About ten feet from the base of David he stopped. He slowly raised his head like a beast in moonlight. It was the size of the feet that hit him first. Then he noticed the toenails, the veins running up into the ankles, and the calf muscles, so large and smooth, so right and human. He stepped back and took in the whole of the lower half of the body. He noted how the anatomy of shifted weight showed in the stone, how the oversized right hand gently hid the skeletal work, and how the genitals and pelvis were so intricately formed. He had read how the enormous statue (almost seventeen feet in height) was carved from a faulty block of marble and that the sculptor worked with the premise that carving life from stone was merely extraction, that is, that the form already exists within the stone and the artist simply uncovers it. His eyes rose to the great arms and broad chest, the clean and tender drape of the sling, the wide collarbone and the tense neck. He stared up to the partial profile and then walked slowly around the form. He saw many faces in the one. He saw great fear in the brows under live tendrils of curled hair. He saw anger and doubt and youth and an utterly unreconciled courage. The form overwhelmed him. He made few rational associations, however. The figure stood for itself only, was pristine and curious. He knew the creature from dreams. It lived, and he knew too that within the great marble veins ran a wild and heavy blood.

—Fred Gallagher

THE EAR PIERCING

Mother, you were God
refusing
to bless
the fire engine red
of my fingers,
ankle bracelets serpentine,
with their sexual hissing
and my flourescent falsies
worn like headlights
into womanhood.

You were the philosopher
who mused
over metaphysics
and called ear piercing
a crime,
who understood
the holes punched
in the flesh like paper.

As I crawl
into my forties
with adolescent daughters
of my own
Oh, mother, I was God today
suffering
the brass studs shot
like nails
into their sinless ears,
and mother, I was God
who touched and healed
and made them whole.

—Catherine Pope



MORNING FLIGHT

—Painting by Fr. Bertrand Pattison

DIRGE

Empty altars arrogantly dominate the room,
In the shadows the gypsies whisper softly,
Yet shed no tear at the nearing of the doom.
The club-footed cobbler half-smiles a wry grin,
Quaffs another lusty draught of ale,
Turns back around, and counts the stars again.
The wenches now dance 'pon the wine stained table,
And the statesmen start to drool;
Lightning strikes the tower of Babel,
Electric breath revives the Fool.
As He enters, the barman looks away,
The gypsies all fall silent for a second,
The wenches, of a sudden, stumble and sway.
The plowman picks the calluses of his hands,
And wonders where's the worth,
The Fool grins, as though He understands
The mysteries of the earth.

The Wise Man enters, the common folk feel blessed,
The gypsies all fall silent for a second,
The barman runs, so easily impressed.
As he turns his head, the cobbler loses count;
The wenches shout their prices to the statesmen,
Stolen from those that toil, they have the right amount.
The Wise Man begins his latest discourse,
Expounding reason as beginning and end;
The plowman leaves to saddle his horse,
Wondering why no man's a friend.
"Through Madness only, wisdom comes!"
Cries the Fool, picking his nose,
"The blindman alone can see the sun!"
The cobbler shrieks and howls with icy glee,
As he shouts in stutters, eyes of fire,
"I've numbered them all, all thirty-three!
Now look to thy past, now learn true desire!"

The Wise Man alone retains a calm,
"What said you, beggar-scabbed Fool,
You who've never seen the Dawn?"
"I know the crooked-wit of the gods."
"What would you know, leperous Fool,
You that sleep amidst the swine and dogs?
What now, you claim to be 'inspired';
You take me for a Fool as well? Ha!"
"Only the Fool can see,
Though many look."
The Wise Man stammered,
Behind, the tower shook.

—Paddy Hanner

THE BORDERGUARDS OF SISTERHOOD*

"...pray for our brothers and sisters who have died..."

Here, at 11.45

I petition
for long-gone grandparents
dwindled Greatgranny
unformulated Others
whom?

humanity —

Surpassing years
greatgreat grand
parentbrothers,
parentsisters, after all
do form.

On time,

grandchildren's children
will trans form me
their sister
conjuring
brittle snapshotshapes
in time.

Suspended past

hours I breathe
one brief eternity
unspatial
and,

no matter,
link

"strandentwining cable" of all
spirit fast

Free from 11.46 and "here" —

Except,

two Fates,
borderguards
of sisterhood,
untwine three generations:

*First appeared in the Delta Epsilon Sigma *Bulletin*, 1978.

Timespanned Grandsister
and that sister
coming live from the South
to call me
Grandmother —
that pair —
barricade the center
(Daughters and Mother)
find me
still mother
always daughter
And I kneel unwilling
to face
such liberation,
Here, at 11.47 . . .

—Jean S. Moore

Overleaf: SAINT PLACIDUS. Photograph by Abbot Walter Coggin.





WHEN COMES CHIRON?

Hard fire jumps blue and splashes
Across the hairy cripple's chest,
As the thundering hammer crashes,
And the smould'ring orb sinks into the west.
The sparks explode and shoot haphazard
About the skull of the sky,
They hang as stars, and fry:
There Venus, his jeering, frigid wife,
There Mars, his fierce and bloody brother
With bedmates Discord and Strife.
Crooked-wit hurls down the spears of flame,
In fury blind he flings, heedless of the aim.
Morpheus himself shudders at the quakes
In his distant gilded realm,
And each man upon the slumb'ring earth,
From pleasing dreams, with stabbing screams awakes.
Shackles forged of finest silver
And Diana's sacred locks,
Designed to hold the miscreant
Upon his isle of steel and rock.

—Paddy Hanner

EULOGY TO THOMAS HARDY

Once upon a time
a man looked up at the moon
and shouted at its Maker
"Hey, you!
Look what I've done!
Worked and sweated and toiled
all of my life

at describing you
and shaping your reality
in the minds of men
to an understanding
of you."

*And all he heard
and understood
was*
—so what?—

—Michelle Kidd

UNDER GLASS*

Poets are looking out their windows
a lot
lately;
 their cold winter yards
 their old cards
 meaningful landscapes of shrubbery,
out there, like Modern Man,
 all night.

Whitman's Lamp,
 brought inside,
 and burning low;
domesticated,
 like a fat cat
 living, as best it can,
without balls.

"My knowledge, my fate, my books,"
 doing their best
 to grow
 old comfortably.

As if the poor and unsuccessful
 had, like property,
 no speech,
 gained, apparently, from leisure,
and an occasional review
 in the quarterlies —
confusing narrowness with depth,
self-delusion with doubt,
fame with fortune.

*First appeared in *The Connecticut Writer*, 1983.

Let's us comfortless
get lost;
from Medea in her Stationwagon,
Homer pacing his Lawn,
Visions without legs.
Go out, Go out, said good old Auden
and let the
complacent
be.

—Russell Fowler

THE LEGACY

Parched tongue
and promises
of better days ;
breathing slowly,
the dry air,
we move — angry,
arrogant .
Butterflies die,
flowers die,
and days die .
No one speaks,
as the tyrant
moves from shore
to shore .
At dawn
there are no
leaves .
Bare branches
bear witness
to burning skin
and dust ;
still arrogant,
with no regrets
we watch :
children suffer
and no relief .

—Veda Doss

THE NIGHT GOD MOVED IN

I could almost swear
I heard you at four this morning
Hanging Utrillos,
Hammering my heart like tin
And in the rusty joint of sleep
Banging on my bones
Like pipes,
Rattling me awake
To orange juice in bottles
And the smell of fresh coffee.

—Catherine Pope

MORE THAN ONE FOR ONE

Backwards and across
With little to say or do
Without a boss.
Oh how it seems so true
That one must fish for loss;
I'm a one-man crew.

—Steve Willis

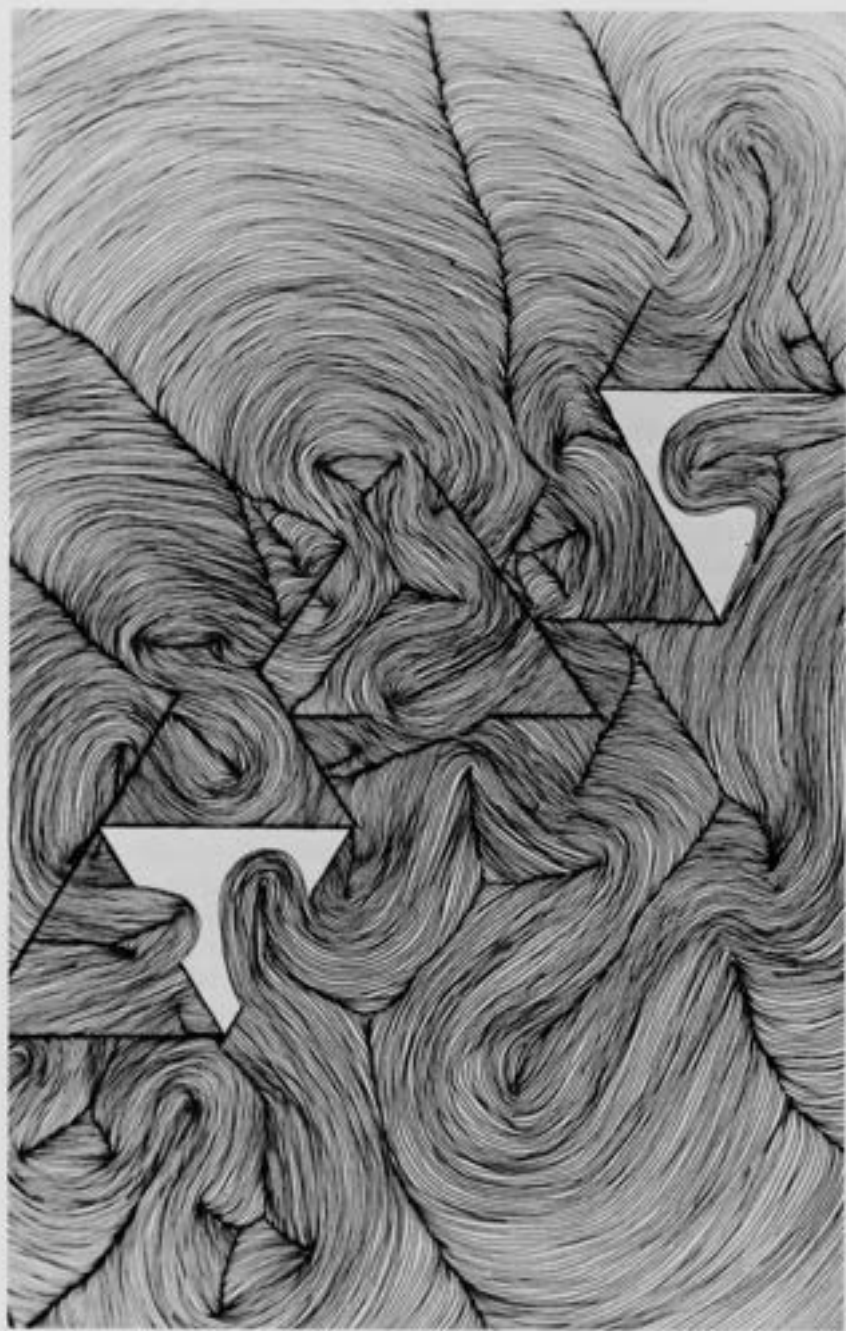
A GOOD GIMP IS HARD TO FIND

June-Mae Cartwheel was as jealous today as she had been for twenty years. "Green as my pickled tomatoes!" her mother said. "Just because your sister is 'special' you go around thinking nobody ever loved you, moping around like some old fleabitten dog. Well, Jesus is watching us all, child, and less you start perking up you gonna be lost forever. Lord, you can't even enjoy your own birthday without turning green as a cucumber." June-Mae became especially jealous on her birthdays because she had never really had one, all to herself that is. For every present she ever got sister April-Mae got one too, all on account of her old handicap. June-Mae had been so blessed everyone always said, and she generally agreed. After all she had all her toes and all her fingers, thick enough hair to bleach real pretty; there wasn't a lick of acne anywhere in her past; and her busoms were large and attractive but not too large "to be an outright invitation to vulgarity" as her mother said. But there were times when she thought of her perfect beauty as a devil's curse and she saw herself a tragic heroine on the stage of life, kind of like Marilyn Monroe. However, nobody else in the whole county saw perfect beauty as a curse so, she supposed, it really couldn't be counted as one. If only she had been born without a head instead of April-Mae then the whole world would revolve around her and she would get presents on everybody else's birthdays. Why, even January, the caramel colored negress that raised them favored the headless child. But this was because January too once had a headless baby. His name was July. He walked off a pier down at October's Pond fifteen years ago. She used to rub the nub of his neck to get him to sleep at night and she loved him "mo dan ifn' he'da had two heads!" she said. June-Mae's father, J. August Cartwheel, was a small hairlip man about two and a half feet tall who had worked in a carnival eating live animals before he met and fell in love with the girls' mother. Naturally he related more to April-Mae, as any hint of physical normalcy in human beings made him feel weak at his stomach.

So that left June-Mae, perfect all but her green as oca jealousy, all alone. Of course there was her mother, May-Mae, but ever since she had experienced a complete and total transformation from a life of temptation and sin to one of the pure and forgiving mercy of Jesus Christ, whom she had now accepted as her personal savior, there was no talking to her. June-Mae took to drinking Rolling Rock beer everyday after she got off work at the five and dime. She'd sit at Joe March's diner and fight off the millhands as they came in from their second shift jobs. One tall shy boy, however, she didn't fight off. On the contrary she was the aggressor in the relationship. February Lineberger was a deaf mute who knew little about

girls but became willing to learn with June-Mae who, for the first time in twenty years, began to feel "special!" And after about three and a half months she began to look special too. Her belly grew like a squash plant, expanding, it seemed, with every minute. She didn't know if the child she was carrying was a product of love or lust. That didn't really matter. Her mother asked her to move out and she did so without argument. Feb Lineberger went back to a state school for the deaf and dumb for an indefinite period of time. June-Mae was on her own but not completely alone, for each Wednesday night when August and May-Mae went to prayer meeting, April-Mae got January to lead her to her sister's small apartment, where once a week in the hot steamy evenings the headless sister held June-Mae in her arms patting gently the enormous stomach, and turning green as collards.

—Fred Gallagher



TRIANGLES

—Pen and ink by Mary Ann Mumma

I. THE SPECTRA OF LIGHT*

In the middle of the
unwindowed, dim
auditorium, in the
middle of men and
women young enough
to be children, I
blink at the light
fracturing dark
between us:

"You are not who
you were yesterday . . .
Not who you are to
be tomorrow . . . Even
when you are dead . . .
living to eternity
you never are who
you are yet to be . . ."

I stare at mad strands
of your hair, warped
threads of your beard,
straightening! rays,
beams from sun of your
face, blinding light,
unshadowing my way.

1. After today
whether your gray-brown hair wags
your shoulder,
your long, thin Fu Manchu beard strags
your chin,
whether you wear this green/black jungle
tunic, or,
strung to gutcord,
shell/toothpendants noose your neck,
what you, what anyone wears,
how you, how anyone appears,
no matter!!
before, unable to turn,

*From Section II, *Break Bread With Me*

prisoned, I saw only
shadows, unreal
forms;
now you struggle to free
me; into the sun,
you dare me look
without wearing dark
glasses.

2. Unrecognized (Kierkegaard's modern day
saint) you are true
"self!"

In your becoming (Korean War hell) you
fell into the bellywell,
wallowed for meaning.

With leopard-strength, leopards five
score and ten, in the blacklight,
with God Himself,
you wrestled to leap out
free.

Like the Umbrian Saint Francis, whose feast
October 4, you were born, you gave away your
Boston-birth,
gold of your soap inheritance,
turned your back on Back Bay, prim
Pilgrim forbears; and,
like Moses, like Dionysius the Areopagite,
Aquinas, Dante,
you climbed the Cloud of Unknowing,
arrived "at the Invisible Feet of Him who is but who
is not, who is all light, but
darkness too, who is mind
beyond reach of mind,
word beyond Utterance";
you heard the pure
silence, His voice
calling,
"Follow Me!"

3. For your flock
(New Hope, St. Gabriel's Rutherfordton,
Margaret, Robert, the black poor)

for me, least of your moles,
smaller than the tiniest mote
pupils of your eyes spy, you weed out
doubt, reseed faith:
My old life,
limbo of dimness in den of plenty,
had slim light; flickered low-glow,
firefly.
Now you unpluck for me unknown star:
blazing dazzle,
blinding light.

a Hand a Face
Flaming amber tongue
a Wing a Rock
Shapes
He
takes
evading
comprehension

4. Thirsty, dry,
I drink wine: epistemology;
vintage rare,
full, deep, I swallow;
charged with bubbles of learning,
I reel drunk.
5. You allow your mind
(poly-nylon-spandex) stretch its
memory to answer my hammering
questions (biology, botany, literature, science,
history, horticulture, zoology, theology, philosophy,
music, anthropology).
Anything you do not know?
6. I walk you to the parking lot.
At your car, forestgreen-Datsun-Stationwagon,
I keep you standing as long as you can stand to
stand.

7. Under the tuliptree earth rugs
antique rich Tabriz:
topaz/ruby/gold leafpattern
lushness.

On it you spread reverence,
picnic where side/by/side Socrates and
Christ plate; sameness with difference.
Peripatetic teachers, neither wrote a word;
each, charged with disciple-corruption, was
tried, found guilty, condemned to die:

Socrates loved Athens so much
he drank the hemlock; Christ
loved man so much he died on
the cross.

What suddenly jabs me:
you, peripatetic teacher (like Socrates,
like Christ), with books to temple,
do not stack wordblocks, stain page gospels.
What suddenly terrifies me,
am I being called to act your
Plato? Your Matthew, your Mark? Luke? John?

—Grace DiSanto

College and was Abbot of the monastery from 1960 to 1970.

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