

TAKING A FRIEND TO MARISSA'S STUDIO

I should prepare you. Marissa is--different.
Might as well see the humor in it. She does.
Inside you'll notice a dangling burnt smell.
No, there's been no conflagration
but I worry about one. She's said it often--
she can't stand to just stand watching,
waiting for soup to heat or sauce to thicken.

Her stove's been glazed with multiple boil-overs
and two aluminum melt-downs I know of.
Her pots are etched with heat chemistry
and Brillo hieroglyphics.
If she invites us to stay for lunch, try hard
not to look critical of the mass on your plate.

She's an artist. Not excuse enough
for an ordinary mortal but Marissa and ordinary
make an oxymoron. Marissa's life
reaches critical mass in blended pigments.
Her easel supports her, something few painters
can claim. Her portraits emanate peeled soul.
Her subjects have a pulse. Her clients pay
dearly for that. I suspect she does too.
Or maybe Marissa and mortal make an oxymoron.

But I know she can die. I've seen her do it
as she mixes her blood and her light
on her palette and wills all her breath
to the canvas.