

THE MASTER SILVERSMITH

Poured from the crucible, silver
looks disappointing, greasy,
not the worthy brilliance of mercury,
less bright than tin. Cooled solid,
turning proud, it awaits
the complements of my tools.

An exquisite trade, beguiling to clients,
beguiling the craftsman. Oh, these figures
I cast are not idols, no household deities
lie molten in my shop, desirous of worship.
I have no use for lesser gods.

What emerges from the molds is beauty
sterlingly personified, ready to serve
its maker, eager to gather praise
for the hunger that formed it.
Acclaim is an addictive design. I need

to look often into the soldering flame to see
the source of artistry is not myself.
The bestower of talents is not genetic dice,
but the one only, unalloyed God
who has told us he tolerates no rivals.

Lord, master the smith,
burn out vanity like wax,
leaving the fire-clean cavity to fill--

not with my creation, but thine.

--Glenna Holloway