

APPRENTICE ARTIST

Ages ago, images ago,
she was accustomed to acclaim as a painter
of iris, content with replication:

Brushstroking floral vitals at their peak,
shape and sheen of the premises,
exactitude of shade,

the whole canvas conspiracy
of two dimensions in mitered space
comforted her with awards for perfected views.

Suddenly confronted with sightings
of unguessed galaxies in petals,
strange promises beyond lavender standards,

beyond bearded junctures of veined purple,
she now sees runic nodes ripen beyond
the reach of sable hair and palette knife:

Planets and fetal faces inhabit white;
oceans, lungs, mountains, bones
blend with pink plasma, dust of maroon.

The pale scent of blue and yellow fades
from her sleeve. Armies and godsmiths,
prophets and poets abide in wet furls

as tropic pastels fail and fall.
Now the impatient stem, the stalk of knowing,
twisted like steel wire, supports a forming:

Marrow grows in the unknown dimensions.
There is no such thing as still life.
Her not-yet captured subject seethes

on an inner palimpsest, stretches and turns
on its own pedestal, testing invented armatures,
clawing its way to the surface of her clay.