

## BANQUET

Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Renoir & company,  
even Bosch, created feasts: savory Venuses,  
Madonnas, warriors, saints, Earth and Hell  
as serving trays and fine napery. They cultivated

epicurean tastes for the Fates, Muses, gods, kings,  
and curvilinear still life for the eye  
eager to devour catered canvas helpings  
prepared to fill discriminate cells with vision.

Shorter-sighted peasant tastes still revel  
in old masters' color plates: Titian-roasted venison  
oozing melted amber on silver salvers, platterscapes  
of pheasant collaged with grape leaves juxtaposed

with creamy calm of custards. Almond-hued loaves reveal  
velvet centers daubed with just-out-of-the-churn yellow.  
Even as garnish for grander subjects, palettes of plums,  
cinnamon, pomegranates, yams and apricots rival sunset.

Pome-cheeked cherubs baste boar ribs  
with Tintoretto sauces. Heraldry-crested wine casks pose  
with stag-handled knives piercing harvest moon cheese  
crusted with walnuts and grated tropics.

Primed to nourish esthetics, the eye dines on its apple,  
swirls the subliminal, blends the surreal. Impressionism  
rises on pizzicato bits of Mozart clinging to warm oil aroma.  
Incipience of Gershwin jazz caroms off cauldrons

of steamy sibilance. Melody pours from crystal pitcher,  
copper ladle-- liquid lyrics to satisfy now and future hunger:  
Arcane artistry of cool limes, hot peppers, corn pearls  
winking through raw silk. Pigments and figments preserved

in all dimensions, even the fourth, lasting long after  
tablescapes are cleared. Beauty and bounty as edible verse.  
Gerard Manley Hopkins saying the blessing.  
Amen.