

BIOGRAPHER FOR THE BELDAM

Like sanctified relics
of old despots who sold
their bottled bathwater and tears
to their subjects, and enshrined
their shed hairs in gold casks,

her words are preserved
in their own resinous venom.
Some strange chemistry keeps them
firm and precise as delivered
while the mouth that mints them
shrivels like a drawstring purse.

His famous pen bides its time.
His sleep is no longer troubled.
Knowing there are rich collectors
of such bibelots, he waits,
quietly smiling, watching
the fossil wasp
enhance the price of amber.

—Glenna Holloway