

Multiplication

How can I be wheeled down these white corridors
23 years after, without touching your hand? brightening, diminishing:
tawny-girl in lacecap of sunlight:
Movement without memory is insanity: you are planted in tapestry:
a cobalt flower.

Your 12-year-old hands held the reins
of death surely, your eye aflame:
While cancer went about its multiplication
exact as lace, or honeycomb.

They cut off one leg
but it reached the hip:
indigo wore you down.
(We'd close our eyes to picture cobalt-gardens.)

Your cheeks some days were bone-white
like the girl of Dresden holding our silk lampshade
back home:
other days, they were pink like those planted in quilts:

Rose, a North Renaissance girl.
Near the close of your life
your face was pearl: milky-grey,
it glowed in all that brightness by the window:

a nun of 12, determined, not angry,
whose sole task was to meet your king.
Cobalt-gardens multiplied, then. A sole visitor,
an aunt brought you a furtrimmed jacket for your diminished frame.

You grew up three years overnight, & were a Vermeer
young woman: (the Dutch wear such jackets in wintertime
to keep out the damp cold of Delft Holland:)
the windowpane threw lemon light on your jacketed frame.

Hoarflowers formed in the glass—
multiplying, multiplying, until by ice-tables, they covered
you & me both with lace of a cream-white curtain
celled by snowflake bright incarceration.

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