

ON THE STREET

Each day you pass this woman
sitting on the sidewalk.
She is pressed against the building.
She is wrapped as for a funeral pyre;
shawls wound around her.
Only her face looks out of this cowl
and her hands, ready to turn palms up,
if you are not hardened to her.
If you allow yourself to look closer,
you see her, as though adjusting
a microscope. Her skin comes into focus.
It is layered like fallen leaves;
blue around the lips and blotched
with ochre and brown.
The flume of the avenue sweeps
as in a monsoon; a patterned commerce
of debris. If you hesitate,
you are sucked into a chalice
of saints and miracles; the body's
unexpected lush response
to all you have hidden from yourself.

SORTING IT OUT

Falsely soft, infinitely far,
the chlorophyll machine.
Each socket knocked by a photon
from the mother star.
It's the trees and their green flesh.
Listen, our fingers feel the hiss.
The great blue whale
picks up the sonar.