

Why I Like Painters ·
William Pitt Root

Morning air like salt
braces an aspect
 of the light
painters adore,
 who scorn
the too-sweet blossomings
of vegetation bright
 along the paths
they live their lives by.

This one chooses models
he ignores for hours,
 attacking
his blank canvas
 with still lives
of jugs and sextants
as he breathes in
 odors from her body
languishing across his couch.

He smiles and pays her
generous praises
 and the going rate
as she leans down
 smiling privately
to gather her clothes,
and dresses. "I want
 to be reminded what
I'm missing with this brush."

We spend the afternoon
drinking on the bay,
 discussing the active
and passive voice, ionization
 and light, the rates
of precipitation for
variously ground pigments,
 cunnilingus and enlightenment
in *The Yellow Book*.

At sunset we are speechless, afloat
with our bottles and our thoughts,
 when his wife, whose eyes
are flecked with gold,
 swims through the mirrored
sky and climbs aboard, smiling.
It is midnight as I write this.
 Occasionally I glance
toward the couch and nod.