

A View of Titian's Mary Magdalene ·
Ilene Moskin

She would hang herself
with her snarling hair,
yet her breast remains brilliant,
its nipple, a rakish crown, a spire.

I watch this Mary Magdalene
who kissed the young boy Jesus
and shadowed him to the well.

Lifted from his skull—
that plundered box on the table—
the gold that was his halo
winks now at her lips, her sleeve.

Kisses—even mourning,
Mary's mouth is brimming with them.
She cannot spit them out
like cherry stones.

The chilly god
crops out along her body.
She can't conceal the stolen gold.