

THE LAST ACT

On the way out he chose war,
dashed the Emperor's damned amphorae
with a short sword.

—She should have come on heavy,
breathing like slaves—he said,
considering her big Nile dugs,
her rivened ass.

Tony knew
that war is a green girl always
to fall back on,
to barely survive her thrashing,
her inexperience with tongues
(Octavian's gift, snaking down the steps
like a purple robe to lie in).

He knew that foreplay's the thing
to catch an aging queen
if you can end it.

R A M S E S A D A M A N T

Ramses said her verse
was divorced from her person, though
she breathed it like a camel.
Her body works its hip on the lectern;
her lower lip is hot
and her asp eyes
seek the faces before her
for one more oasis.