

## 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.

Ramses: stone-eyed, stone-lipped  
Chairman of the Mountain, 180 feet tall,  
backed to rock. Below him  
men and women stroll on the desert floor;  
maidens drag their veils.  
He knows them  
as he sees her spot her new victim

whose wife drinks sand.  
Ramses hears her intone the cool morning,  
the hunting moon and tulips;  
he sees them drink to pain,  
squeeze hands, in conversation  
coil and sway.

All this rock! Cleft for him  
by a cast of thousands, his cock  
drying in the tomb

while women in Alexandria  
wait on the library steps  
for her latest manuscripts.  
Will she heave another slave  
from the scaffold of her tits,  
under Ramses nose?

From way up there, he sees  
the pyramids as abstractions;  
in the soft curving dunes he  
apprehends the subtlety  
of his Queen, long necked, quiet  
Nefertiti.