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Soliloquy of a Painter's Mistress

Carla Thomas

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Carla Thomas

SOLILOQUY OF A PAINTER'S MISTRESS

A slave all day to beauty, you prune the blue from air.
Squeezing the sky from tubes, you transpose color
Into meaning. When the light goes, dolor
Rises—the lunatic sun sucks pigment from the bare
That night makes.

Every evening it's the same: black laces the room,
My skirt scatters cinnamon to the floor,
Mint tea steams glasses, I nod, you pour
The day's misfortunes to the perfume
Of my long wait.

The plain are blessed. In them a rest is found
From beauty. The pain of creating perfect swirls
Of light, of hanging the world with pearls
Grown in darkness—eased by a gowned
And patient mistress.

When you sleep the sky is sad.
Its slow pass blinks through curtains,
Bathes your skin in blue uncertain
Light. You dream as under water; the mad
Earth spins your form.

