

Shorn

Michael Noble

Locking the door to the bath,
opens the collar of the shirt,
raises chin, fingers buttons
from their holes, lengthens torso,
molts like a snake.

In the arms, clutches
the folds of shirt and pant,
lifts the scent to the face,
breathes deeply, intimately
the incense.

With other eyes, follows
the bare arm from shoulder
down, lusts for the soft muscles
of the chest, combs its hair
with curious fingertips.

In the mirror, spreads arms
and legs symmetrical
like the sketch by DaVinci,
studies anatomy as geometry,
subtracts all familiarity.

Massages the circles of shoulders,
then the rounded rectangle
of abdomen, pushing down
to the lines and length
of thigh and loin.

Bathes, water runs
in rivers down the back,
twists around legs. Fingers
bead the water condensing
on skin as on glass.

Drinks, slides the tongue
through the dew that gathers
in the downy fur of the forearm,
tastes the steam, heat
and innocent sweat.

With long, rapid swipes
smooths the silver razor
down beard and neck,
reckless, savoring the kiss
and the sting of the blade.

Insatiate, the knife lingers in the hand,
steel caresses the eager flesh
of scalp, breast, stomach,
thigh—the dark hair washes away
leaving the man naked.

Like a voyeur, stares
at the raw skin, the scratches
wet with blood and rain streak,
lace this body with pink watercolor.
Cut clean.