After the Curtain Falls,
Isabella Speaks in Achromatics

Dayna Patterson

Dear Isabel,

I have a motion much imports your good,
Whereeto, if you’ll a willing ear incline,
What’s mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.
—Vincentio, Duke of Vienna, Measure for Measure

What’s yours is yours
and I am

{Cool  Charcoal  Slate}
/sworn to simplicity
he ignores my short white veil
chaplet of beads brown tunic/

not yours. You’re silver,

{Nickel}
tarnished, a self-made
playwright-god, blocking
others’ moves. But I’m

{Platinum  Gunmetal  Lead}
/not yet bride
of christ a nova
not yet postulant
awaiting knotted cord

{Eider Down  Whale}
wimple not yet the serre-tête
black veil brown habit/

no actor. Throat open,
/saint clare sister
savior patron of laundry
wash me/

{Grey-green  Blue-grey  Glaucous}
would-be stage master,
you will hear me.

/saint clare
patron of goldsmiths gild
my speaking/

{Metallic  Franciscan}
I’ve already sworn my faith to
/saint clare patron of television i’m antenna
to your signal enclose me in ghostly
calligraphy/

{Dark  Dim  Light}
the One
you’ve failed to impersonate.

/saint clare patron
of needlework stitch me
a center of winter/

You’ve un-haloed unholy
angels, spared a sinner-
brother’s life. For these mercies

/saint clare patron of eye
disease shield these
orbs from/

{Fog  Goblin}
melded, my honest
thanks. But I do not consent

/saint clare patron of good
weather blow me always
january/
{Storm  Sleet  Jet}
to your jack-in-a-box
proposal. When you uncowl,
\[\text{grow me into thorned}\]
\[\text{rose my blood}\]
{Cinereous  Ash}
frost to snow-broth/
reveal a dull crown, I unveil
my answer, yank back crushed
velvet to declare:
\[\text{/I hold the Lord—}\]
\[\text{and I am held/}\]
{Smoke  Marengo}
\textit{Wolf}. I say \textit{No}. I say