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Nitrous Oxide

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NITROUS OXIDE

You search for the bones of your past.

Damn you, Dr. Theo!

Why can't you see

you're the artist

not the patron?

Stop filling your life

with gold and silver,

you, the master of decay,

you, the master of deceit,

you, wasting away.

Stop building bridges

and doing canals.

You shouldn't be drilling and suturing,

picking and packing,

extracting and straightening,

but sculpting and molding.

But you went to school for six years,

studied periodontics and TMJ

while longing to be Miro and Rodin,

your hands caught in clay.

You think of Rome, the Pieta,

the sound of the Trevi. You smile,

then remember Schone Brunnen and Nurnberg.

So many gifts,

talents you push aside

to mold with the green,

to watch people flinch

at the sight of you;
they spit blood in your fountain,
your own Bernini
financed through the bank.
Aspiration doesn't always work.
Their bloody drool runs down
the tools God loaned you.

Ten years ago, for three days
I posed for your first, your only, work.
"Why, Theo?"

 "I like to work with my hands."
I was young then,
old enough to know a lie,
smart enough to predict a failure.

Embedded within your anger
are teeth, hair, eyeglasses, ashes, ovens
the grandfather you never met.
I admired your work, my sleek body,
on your coffee table,
again begged you to tell me why.
you picked up my clay body,
hurled me against the wall,
to see me crumble
into a thousand pieces.
Pieces, broken, like the bones of your past.

Marti Miles-Rosenfield