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My daughter at 21

Sam Lusk

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My Daughter at 21

Sam Lusk

Once I wrote a poem for a woman
And used a vase as a metaphor.
She responded: I'm not empty.
But I liked the image. A vase can be
Beautiful on the outside, and can be
Filled with the ephemeral
Or the immortal.
If I think of you as a vase,
I think, art nouveau —
Willowy, beautiful, in a languorous setting,
Among Greek-like characters
Around a classic reflecting pool,
Its water stirred slightly by everlasting
Considerations of life.
The vase, tall, green, sinewy,
Can halt anarchy in nature,
As it sits resplendent, monarchical.
That may be enough.

But sleek ceramic fails to define us.
Oh, filled with flowers, that vase may win
The contest of the day,
But Nature vigorously corrodes
And the vase declines.
Yet if it builds its soul to fill its beauty,
It becomes more radiant, as this soul,
Alive and growing, shows through.

You, best philosopher for you,
Deny custom that leaves only emptiness.
Let muscles ache from the pull of the oar,
Feel the dog bite,
Taste the chocolate that tightens the throat;
The leaves of summer are still,
The undulant sound of the locusts
Rises and falls, rises and falls,
As swarms of blackbirds wheel to that sound.
These things, and the vase,
Are all we know of life, and are all of life.

A vase can be
Beautiful on the outside,
Filled with the ephemeral
Or the immortal.

Girl with Roses

Aylia A. Gomez