**WHITE ROAD**

*Men che dramma di sangue m'è rimaso, che non tremi.*\*

Martina Reisz Newberry

*Don't throw me no drag, now* she said.

I don’t, I won’t.

While you still hear me, I’ll tell

my tales as candidly as I can.

These are wretched times;

times that poems cannot fix

and we are living them.

We are stricken with lies

and food that leaves us hungry

and the vivid marks of war

like stripes on the backs of our souls.

This is what I ask of you:

that you stay to the end of this poem–

at least this one.

While you still hear me,

there are things you should know:

they may be bruised,

but there are still apples, tart and cool from a tree

and while the sky is definitely falling, there are,

now and then,

patches of beryl, cerulean, and iceberg

still haunting it.

We are not kissed by fortune

nor blessed by happenstance

so there is reason to fear

and, that being said,

while they may be hardened

by work, by slavery, by rancor or pain

there are still hands, warm caresses on our heads.

And, while the nourishment of good sex

is undervalued,

and turned sometimes into revenge,

the bare calves of a lover beneath a quilt

still sustain and condole.

I’ll throw you no drag, no matter what.

I say live, even precariously, even sadly.

Live, you who are left to listen,

as though the notion of life intrigues you,

as if living is all there is to do

even as it remains a velleity.

\*​Divina Comedia, Dante Alighieri, , Canto XXX, lines 46-48