

Stone Girls

One of Rodin's models. Who knows  
What she was thinking

When she rolled on the studio floor and spread her thighs  
So widely, to become *Iris*,

*Messenge of the Gods* — her bronze labia  
Glittering darkly in flight.

Or the girl who shocked Eleusis that night.  
Did she want to see herself

As others could see her? She was anyone,  
Among the initiates

Winding beside the sea, whose waves  
Were glimmering with spirits,

Until she dropped her robe and went for a swim.  
She came out grinning.

But the keepers of the Mysteries were not amused. This  
Was sacrilege. The sentence, stoning.

She was like, sorry, I just wanted to be myself!  
They didn't care. It didn't matter

That her breasts were tipped with platinum  
Before she dove,

Balanced briefly  
In a pose that showed how ethereal

A body could be, like moonstruck marble,  
Like a stele by starlight.

#### Mt. Auburn Posthumous Poem

Winslow Homer is my neighbor here,  
In "the great white city of the Dead,"  
As Emily Dickinson called it. And Margaret Fuller  
Or at least a plaque with her name on it.  
And here in my own row, the great gad-fly,  
The journalist I.F. Stone.  
Remember him? No?

From "Tales of the Prayer Messenger Service"

1.

A Sunday afternoon in July. Dead still.  
Heat near a hundred, humidity, forget it.  
Weather so bad it was news. *Use caution today,*  
Advised the *Globe*. I went out running anyway.

The streets were empty, as if the city  
Had fallen ill or was under a baleful spell,  
As I ran down to the river's edge and the bridge  
Where Harry Houdini had dangled in chains

And escaped, in a miracle of his arrangement.  
But today, nothing. Heat haze. Blank white space.  
Then as I crossed over, a second figure was inked in.  
I saw him standing at the rail. He was looking up

2.

At three kites flying  
In the upper air, tethered to wispy lines,

His arms raised, his palms lifted,  
Two lines tied to his wrists

And one to the rail.  
But how had he broken vacancy's spell?

He stood there like a conductor  
Summoning brassy chords.

The kites soared in the air.  
Was he even there?

