

A Guest in Egypt

Egypt's moon shines drunken cups tonight,
 shaking her triple bowl through haze.
 The wines' sharp fires have seared my tongue,
 and glutted food has sickened to my taste.
 The eunuch stands beside the jewelled door
 that sways its panels over golden plates,
 and slave girls bear the silver dish of fruit;
 they come in mist, like waving fans,
 in double forms of grace.
 The hour has childed dreams,
 and what my Eros seeks
 bends like the reeds to Cleopatra's wish,
 where love reflects her thousand mirrored forms
 in shapes of beauty from the brazen walls.
 White arms like roots lift up their hands
 to draw me downward to the fecund marsh.
 My mind's pool swirls its vortex of desire;
 a brilliant sheen, it twists around her eye,
 coiling toward her gently moving bed.

—*Ian MacLennan*

Dragonfly Needlework

The dragonfly stitches
 through shadow and light
 a cloak of tenuous colour
 without a known name,
 except perhaps delight.

The dragonfly stitches;
 idly I gaze
 dreaming of gardens,
 enchanted and still
 where silence spun just such a web
 and mystery, lost in its folds,
 vanished behind the farthest hill.

—*Alice MacKenzie Swaim*