

**Traveller**

Leaves fall and flourish in intervals  
of a Goldberg Variation, trills of  
ducats, pennies, coins of London, Rome.  
I begin in another's footsteps down  
the narrow shuttered lane of the old town.  
The sun caught in leaves heaped on brick  
is yellow shellac. Such an old autumn.  
Windows at wrist level. Inside as I pass  
a plump, floured hand polishes  
the ironstone pitcher for the absent sailor.  
I take it along with me, too, wincing, for  
the squares of houseboxes end at the sea  
and its winking expanse throws up gold.  
Once before, leaving Isfahan's famous bazaar,  
dark warren of carpet- and copper-seller,  
I was assaulted by sun and roaring silence.

—Audrey Conard