

JESSE FERGUSON

Little “o” Ode

Feeling unfit to undo the thong
of the *Fifth Symphony*'s sandal,
unwilling to make a bust of the famed bust
with a blunt coal chisel of verse,
and utterly incommensurate to parting
that commanding shock of hair
with a comb of flimsy lines,
I panegyrisize instead the bite marks
on the dowel* that transmitted his piano's
vibrations to his deafened skull,
allowing him to snatch the *Ninth*
from the grasp of eternal silence.

I hold the teeth marks up to the light;
they are deep and decidedly Romantic:
proof of his bulldog grip on glory.
To fall into an incisor's divot is to
plunge into a bottomless ravine from
the highest Bavarian summit—
deeper yet, into the frown-furrow in his brow.

He once parted the vapours of demureness
and mediocrity with this humble Excalibur,
but to take the dowel in hand today
is to raise a frail abandoned chrysalis
after the swell and profusion
of summer wings have come and gone.

*Beethoven used a dowel to transmit the musical vibrations of his piano to his skull, allowing him to play and compose long after he was certifiably deaf.