

MICHAEL PRIOR

## ERASMUS' LAST SUPPER

A vial, drained and downed,  
was found discarded amongst  
his things, (whales' bones,  
withered hands of fungus,  
accumulated cures) the ink  
congealed in a frosted jar,  
the table set for two.

The last rites, performed  
by Dürer's *Salvador Mundi*.  
Faceless, fingers raised  
in admonition: the saviour  
about to speak. His audience  
lies pallid, wrapped between  
plains of linen, gazing  
at the ceiling's rough beams.

It was Dürer's sketches  
that impressed him—hands  
floating loose in their skin,  
the wary hare, crouched  
in rest. Dürer was best  
at dissection, constituents  
separated, centered on the page.

The fish upon his plate  
is half-finished, its soul  
rustles blank sheaves  
of evening, noses its way  
under the olive glare  
of streetlamps. A window  
is left open for its escape.