

CHRISTINE WIESENTHAL

Anemone Aquarium

Fish in their rich brocades, all feather-stitched
tapestries, wave around vellum scrolls, bows
and ribbons, the ruffled vegetable dress
of the sea. Its bed, a fine needle-work

of stars, goose bumps seeded pomegranate,
eggplant, tangerine. And those crazy pill-
box hats, velvet bolts, the anemones.
Studded with dahlia, chrysanthemum quills,

white birthday candles—not your usual
party debris. How this glass of magic
fabric manufacture recalls her now
to me: seamstress, mistress of Berlin wool,

crewl and plain weave. Hemming, darning socks,
fingers nimble as minnows. How haptic
our dead, yet untouchable, too, under
the sumptuary laws of the sea. Press

your hand flat to the glass, and memorize
its art, a cool transparency that draws
and quarters the heart: four air-locked chambers
full of urchins, sea squirts, all ancient forms

of submarine embroidery.

