

Violet Transparent

In winter, just before sunset,
the sky sometimes turns violet,
red and blue in a blend so brief
it can scarcely be called a union.

Then the snow-graced peaks reflect
what most of us come to know:
the best we can have is the welcome
of looking through.

Red, one color removed from hell;
it nevertheless has been there, done its share
of profiting and reaping, bloodied
and disturbed the earth.

Do we need specifics?
Even Matisse, most sensuous painter,
would not have traded his cadmium ore, harvest
born only with fissure: torn vein, cut lode.

And blue, how hard it has tried
to claim the impenitent air—
the cobalt noon so beautiful
it embodies and begs our tears.

The crying was all for nothing. Finally,
it was cold. With the hand of summer severed,
and the fall's red leaves a scattered and withered few,
what was left but reminiscence?

We can't argue with the past,
unless we're mad.
The rest's invented: justice, hope.
The long, slow swell of rectitude and error.

I watch an eagle circle across the bay,
wings easy in the February clear.
There's little else but the wait, the knowing
that again the color will come: a violet

not shadowed, not shining,
lovely yet removed from love,
closer to our hearts
than ever our dreams of God.