**from *Astrophil and Stella*, 7**

When Nature made her chief work, Stella’s eyes,

In colour black why wrapt she beams so bright?

Would she in beamy black, like painter wise,

Frame daintiest lustre, mix’d of shades and light?

Or did she else that sober hue devise,

In object best to knit and strength our sight;

Lest, if no veil these brave gleams did disguise,

They, sunlike, should more dazzle than delight?

Or would she her miraculous power show,

That, whereas black seems beauty’s contrary,

She even in black doth make all beauties flow?

Both so, and thus, she, minding Love should be

Plac’d ever there, gave him this mourning weed

To honour all their deaths who for her bleed.

 —Philip Sidney

 **‘Before I got my eye put out –’**

Before I got my eye put out –

I liked as well to see

As other creatures, that have Eyes

And know no other way –

But were it told to me –Today –

That I might have the Sky

For mine – I tell you that my Heart

Would split, for size of me –

The Meadows – mine –

The Mountains – mine –

All Forests – Stintless stars –

As much of noon, as I could take

Between my finite eyes –

The Motions of the Dipping Birds –

The Morning’s Amber Road –

For mine – to look at when I liked –

The News would strike me dead –

So safer – guess – with just my soul

Upon the Window pane –

Where other Creatures put their eyes –

Incautious – of the Sun –

 —Emily Dickinson

 **Nomad Exquisite**

As the immense dew of Florida

Brings forth

The big-finned palm

And green vine angering for life,

As the immense dew of Florida

Brings forth hymn and hymn

From the beholder,

Beholding all these green sides

And gold sides of green sides,

And blessed mornings,

Meet for the eye of the young alligator,

And lightning colors

So, in me, come flinging

Forms, flames, and the flakes of flames.

 —Wallace Stevens

**Snake Eyes**

That force is lost

which shaped me, spent

in its image, battered, an old brown thing

swept off the streets

where it sucked its

gentle living.

 And what is meat

to do, that is driven to its end

by words? The frailest gestures

grown like skirts around breathing.

 We take

unholy risks to prove

we are what we cannot be. For instance,

I am not even crazy.

 —Amiri Baraka

**The Necklace**

These little irises could be your eyes

if they were twice as large and twice as dark,

but if I got inside them—can I find

the vein that is the tunnel to your heart?

I may be in there: I see signs of movement

under the silky shadow/luminescence;

is it feeling’s fierce integument

or a more troubled, more elusive essence?

Your other eyes have locked me out sometimes

(they have good reason to) but not ignored

the guilty pleading boring out from mine

there are no words for, as there are no words

for what these lacquer seeds say. Irritation

brought them on, but patience made them pearls,

the same slow labor that piles years of pages up—

call it obsession, plodding, imitation,

pigheadedness, simplicity, devotion:

Out of the dented life burled nacre curls

until the final jewel locks rays and rages up.

Remember when you wear these little worlds.

 —Jonathan Galassi

**Summer Beer with Endangered Glacier**

My one eye

does not match

the other

Corrective

lenses regulate

whatever

needs require.

Seeing?

I was being

being seen.

Let be

be finale.

Let our virtues

tally

up against

the obvious.

If we

don’t believe

ourselves

custodial

why all

the hoobla-

hoo, hulla-

balloo?

Passivist

*mon semblable*

*ma soeur*

*soi-même*

blow through

this blue

 —Maureen McLane