

AFFLATUS*

Jackson Willis

“Afflatus” is a poem in the style of the Petrarchan sonnet. The title comes from the Latin word for divine inspiration, but it also sounds a bit like “affliction.” I thought this was appropriate, given that the poem is sort of about a muse gone malignant.

She toils at her craft for hours on endless
Watching helps not in easing her burden
Peace comes with death, not till her last word in
Denouement as preface, the heart in stress

Now the observer must go on friendless
Muse without artist, here comes the curtain
Object inverts, it’s his turn for bourbon
He can’t refuse when abyss begs ingress

But maybe there’s more, and maybe it’s good
Maybe there’s beauty to see on the dive
He watches the carpet where once she stood
The dead can be mined to help the alive
Something like honor, to do as she would
To drown is sordid, not so is to thrive

**Content Warning: Death, Alcohol/Substance Abuse*

