

JAN FABRE'S ASIAN JEWEL BEETLES

The artist, bored with stone, paint, and clay,
bored with hues from tubes
and working alone,
glues dead Asian jewel beetles
onto animal skulls, crosses, palace walls.

Beetles placed side-by-side—
each green expanse from eye to ass,
chasm of indigo, the lake of red—
who once sang Earth's putrid aria
and knew the riddle of land's pledge to sky.

Renounce the plutocrat
commanding a city of malleable citizens
and praise the little things beneath your feet!
Universities, researchers, and Indonesian restaurants
donate the carapaces. Art's sake.

The beetle's armor transforms light,
(indelible light) like the way all mouths are prisms.
Opened, the sound is sun-white light.
Ubiquitous colors can only be viewed
through prisms, like raindrops and exoskeletons.

Fabre's desire for beauty follows death.
He claims he never sacrificed one,
but insect death is undeniable.
He interrupts beetles from becoming worm food.

Fabre's hands stained with iridescent scarab and antennae
is no better than collectors
with their dusty insect carcasses
in shadow boxes like pillories.
Stickpins piercing hearts of the already dead.