

A TOAST FOR THE LIKES OF TWO

Who was it wrote, "If women
had mustaches, they would somehow
make them beautiful.

Look

what they've done with breasts!"

Who disagrees?

Doesn't the Bible

say a woman just an inch
from death will keep an eye
for color?

And don't philosophers

assert that women sacrifice
the ultimate on beauty's altar?

And love's?

Why scoff at that?

Are the male gods of money,
fame, and power more deserving?

What's money but guilt?

What's fame

but knowing people you will never
know will know your name?

What's power but pride translated
into force?

Are these worth more
than what sustains us to the end?

Consider Bertha.

Eighty, blind

and diabetic, she believed that death's
real name was Harold.

“I want
to know what Harold has to offer,”
she would say.

She'd seen
her children's children's children
and presumed she had a poet's right
to give a name to death, if so
she chose.

Chuckling to herself,
she rocked and waited for this last
adventure in her life...

Then
there was Jane, who mothered seven
and left unfinished all her art
by choice as if to prove
that incompleteness is the rule
of life where nothing ends
the way it should... or when.
Two weeks before her funeral
she called all seven to her bed
to say, “I hope to see you all
again... but not right away...”
So here's to the honor of Bertha,
and here's to the glory of Jane!
Let them be spoken of wherever
beauty's lovers gather to applaud
the beauty of love.

Let them
not rest in peace but thrive
in everlasting action, doing
what they love the most.

Who wants
a heaven that's equivalent to one
long sleep?

Those crypted, supine
saints in their basilicas can keep
the dream of their Jerusalem.

The soul
was meant for more than that.
Pray for us, St. Bertha.
Pray for us, St. Jane.