Pride of flesh

For Melanie

Pride of flesh, skin’s vanity,
blood’s boast, hubris of bone,
these are gifts we bring
to this arrangement, virtues
we have more than enough of.

In the mirror, my image wrestles
yours to the glass, distorting
not just what we see but the sense
we have when gazing at perfection
of being close to what god whispered,

to what he may have had in mind
for Eve and Adam had they not
thrown away heaven
for the dubious pleasures
of sex and knowledge. For so little,

they quit the garden, crossing
a boundary beyond which
there is no conception, brave
Columbuses sticking out their tongues
at earth’s edge, leaving god’s forgiveness
behind them in the constant slant of sky. How right the bard was, what fools these mortals be, all the more so if they think they aren’t. Fools who gaze at themselves with wonder,

with reverence, as if seeing something more than what god had intended, the simple arrangement of his form, there on the glass, the reflection burned with balm onto our perfect eyes.

DAVE MARGOSHES