

Mimesis

The living woman is carving a dead one from stone.
She pauses, depressed, resting her chisel
Where the breastbone will be, if
She does not pause too long, if
She can bear to strike.

Their gazes do not meet: the imaginary
Woman has closed her dead stone eyes.
Of course the sculptor could force them open
With her instrument. But then what?

The woman of stone has other business.
Inside the sculpted lines the life
Of minerals persists. Crystal and grit
Remember the laws of their kind
And lastingly obey.

The living woman is violent. Her quarrel
Has been handled with weapons so far
But the stone woman will not die.
She is more and more her immemorial
Self with every blow.

The living woman must finish this.
She was hired to complete an effigy
And she needs the pay. In the air
Of evening, outside the studio, the sparrows
Chatter about their food. Then flicker away.

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