

NOVITIATE

S A L C E T R A N O

Like her mind, the hand between her legs
wanders, prodigal of dull surprise.
No block of wood beneath *this* head stays
its dreaming—she's in a seller's market.
The room is carpeted and warm, adequate,
a dormy crush of girlish possessions
suggesting upholstery of hard decision.

In the glow of a fat scented candle,
St Teresa's face gravely flickers.
A satisfied virgin is a virgin no longer.
There are no locks, yet no one enters:
this paradox accentuates her nakedness,
too startling, she knows, for a mirror.
This side of heaven, clarity is pain.

Her habit is a saddle on the floor.
Following same pilloried thought to bridge
where troll always stood, breathing quickens.
Bead-honed fingers coax merciful rhythm.
This is the final sacrifice of the day.
Waters crest, waves break—you know,
images real women *swim* in.

As plain gold band tweaks nipple white,
a single wrenching moan escapes her lips.
Chopfallen, a great stuffed dog regards.

She must not lose the anchor of her body:
it fills the gaping corners of the night.
A blanket and the candle's perfume cover.
At morning mass, her folk guitar will sing.