The Futilist

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Mrs. Roda Under the Pentagon

Old Mrs. Roda climbed on her hilltop garden
with footsteps shorter than spurts of flame,
in rosebuds planted when a ring was in the moon.

I knew whenever I came home from school to
see the late spring sunlights flirting in her yard,
she would be watching me.

Beckoning faraway she seemed
a soft grey shadow tucked between green spreads of tree,
but coming close I saw her wrinkles strung with pocks
like beads.

She nuzzled whispers in my ear
to tell me how my life was patterned by the stars,
and when I should tack wolf's—bane above my door.

I liked her well enough to fear
that if she ever kissed me with her thoughts,
my mind would know Endymion's sleep.

... Douglas Hodgman

The Futilist

Reason sat in a corner
In a dingy room and frowned.
It knew how perishable
Are smiles. Nor would it
Paint a picture or read a book.
It knew there was no use
In any such endeavor.

Children played in the sunny court
Below, laughing and singing—
Never knowing—Poor Souls—that their
Laughter, their songs, were as the brief
Flicker of a firefly in our dark well.

They laughed, they sang
They didn't know—Poor Souls!

... Pauline Hylkema