

Susan
Barbour

Artist & Model

upturned mandible mirroring
luminous triangle beneath the clavicle

out of these near-rhymes
and one-eyed distances

your likeness arises

forgive me
my broken-hearted art
is how I sacrificed infinity

623911
is the patent number
for the apparatus that guides
banknotes into a slot

each time you leave
it's grabbing my sleeve

I made a pact
with the grammar of
your eye

to archive every
absence of each

other for the other

with my right hand I reach
for the light on my face

from the ball of my left foot
a prayer moves up, streaks through
my body's diagonal

before it finds my outstretched arm,
it slips
out of my eye

all day I've felt trapped
in the mind of the one who doesn't love me

"what you have in common
is your distance"
said the psychic

Time, that gymnast,
yesterday she broke her back

Picasso knew his art
"worked out"
mistress after mistress after
you get the idea

I personally
would be beside myself

I have emptied out
my gaze on you

mapping out, relentlessly,
the underside of touch

I wonder: do you draw the exhale,
the inhale, or both?

the first time I saw a dead body
I was shocked—
mostly by the stillness of the chest

chest is not the word...rib-cage?

when hearts stop
the things that held them lose their names

Susan Barbour is a poet-scholar and artist. Her poems and essays have appeared in journals including *Five Dials*, *The Paris Review*, *Textual Practice*, *Catapult*, *The Review of English Studies*, and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. She is currently based in Los Angeles.

