

Tableau d'Haïti

Tim Mayo

“No ideas but in things” —W. C. Williams

What's most important are these seven white eggs,
each bright as day in the dim details of this room.
They fill a gray plate on the beige table, and
to the right a woman sits in her stiff green chair.

Her blue-shirted back faces out as she tilts
toward the eggs in an expectant pose, and all
you can see of her face are the black promontory
of one cheekbone and the indentation above it
where her eye remains sequestered like a pearl.

There is a red bandana wrapped around her head.
It stands out against the dull greens of the room,
balancing the brightness of the eggs against
the brown and beige of secondhand things.

Two red ends scraggle down from its knot
along the ebony length of her neck; one
of them resembles a frog's leg which seems
to stretch out in an endless upward leap.

Above it all on a brown chest against the wall,
sits a little brass crucifix like a cross on a hill.

Behind the eggs a tin can of an oil lamp
flickers out its little yellow flame so faintly
it's taken a long time to even notice it; and
on the other side of the eggs, a rum bottle
and a tin cup crowd against the red tomatoes.

Lastly, something larger than tomatoes squats
in the foreground near the beige table's edge.
Round and greenish, almost reptilian, its rough skin
bulges out in sections—it's *hard to tell what it is*,

but it ripens, there, between her and everything else.