

## Penelope

He is here, at last!  
The spool of breath unwinds  
And my adorned breast is full of colour,  
The tapestry is complete: a sprawling sheet  
Of vibrant pain and brocaded resolve.

The first was the worst—  
He came with a snare of soldiers,  
With words holed and clumsily woven,  
He huffed and puffed, but I pulled the loose thread  
And his strength pooled at my tender toes.

A sly young master next  
His vulpine eyes pierced cloth  
Needle-sharp, pricking my skin,  
But in such a state, I bade him wait  
Crocodile tears stain his fabric face.

A hundred more knocked  
And a hundred more slammed  
The door to the royal hall, while I  
Waited, hoped, as my fingers worked  
*Might* it open? Might my love stand there?

I need more thread.  
I will cut the tenuous twine of faith  
And bind my hands once more  
A few more months, I wheedled: fetch me cloth, fetch me needles  
Let me finish this row at least.

Under cover of dark  
I pulled apart the leering woollen faces.  
Tomorrow, again, I shall begin  
To weave the spidery growling grins  
As the knot in my chest winds ever tight.