GIANNA PATRIARCA

Big Woman Blues

put on the linen pants
sans the girdle
a new top from the
big lady store
it teases
with a hint of cleavage

puffed up the hair
slipped on the purple sandals
going shopping today

i will buy **you** a treat
you deserve it

must get that **Extract of Eden**
creamy rich
lightly scented
promises to make you look
like Eve

you're wondering what
Eve looked like

Raphael knew
or was it Caravaggio

no double chin on Eve
no tributary lines on the largest
   organ
did you know skin is an organ?

perhaps Eve had moles
impossible
tags maybe
something to do with
   menopause
or too much calcium
is there calcium in paradise?

the porous rock thing
will smooth your heels
it comes from the ocean
healing
something about salt

the esthetician said
you have lovely skin
you look much younger
than your years
don't know how she knew
   your years

soap and water
has served **you** well

time out for coffee
a poem or two
you and Eliot counting spoons
while women come
and women go
all very slowly
on this Tuesday
afternoon

Gianna Patriarca's prose and poetry appears earlier in this volume.

TARA KAINER

This Yearning

The way you look
at me I can tell
you think I haven't
noticed. Doesn't care
Lets herself go
Given up
Those thoughts
flit across your face
like shadows
on stagnant water.
Not Life, I want
to say, Men,
but our relationship
isn't so intimate as that.
Anyway,
it's the inexorable struggle
against the role: you know,
2000 years of false images?
But I can tell
by your
gaze
you fancy yourself
a better judge
of what woman is.
This yearning you sense
in my body, this desire,
you read it all wrong:
I long to walk off the stage,
it says, For once
let me be.