

My Life Now

Hundred year-old wrought iron,
handholds for so many,
the black enamel chipped
by rust and corrosion,
revealing old layer upon layer
of more colorful paint...

The conifers behind
stand upon the stream's bank—
guardians themselves, in gentle
contrast waving tiny green sprigs.
Some have browned from the season.

Up red brick steps first one foot,
then the other...

This ritual one done
countless times over my increasing years.
Heavy ochre of clay lined into squares
giving way to the parabolic curves
of the sandy Florentine ceiling atop--
my relief, my brief respite,
my quick breath of awe in the hallway

before the somber mottled grey bulk
of the Campanile. Beneath those huge
Roman-numeral'd clock hands and face
is a sundial. From the Class of 1877.
1996's Class burnished the bronze plate beneath,
smoothing it of time's accretion of green corrosion.
Nonetheless the cracks and grooves rough-hewn
to my fingertips' touch...

I look up, and in the chilly mist before me

gloomy old Abe's bronze bust peers down sourly—
a fitting repose this President's Day,
his visage run ghoulishly green and grim.

I turn and walk down the gentle grade
towards the most beautiful room on campus.
Beneath its majestic ceiling—well-aged golden gilt
patterned in blossoming flowers, deep-ridged
crosses in mandalas, the expanse highlit by an entire wall
of stacked window panes—
is where I do my best work...

Before me now, off in one last distant glimpse
before I pass through the library's portal,
stands one solitary arch of the Golden Gate Bridge—
the other lost in the uncertain fog of horizon.

This life is mine now.
With uncanny certainty,
bemusement at the years having never realized it,
this life is mine now.