

nudes

by M. F. Sullivan

for a handful of weeks
my father took me to
the college of art and design
downtown
where i took drawing lessons.

the first day there
while she taught me to sketch nudes
the teacher corrected
what had been improperly instilled
by the art teacher
whom i admired.

'who is your teacher?'

'maurer'.

'that explains why you're starting
with the head.
start with the torso instead.'

it was a revelation
and many storeys
above columbus
we traced the muscles of strangers
and i struggled to find the ways
in which i was better
than everyone else
except glena,
who was better at everything,
even being attractive:
so i knew better

than to compete with that.

one day the model didn't show
so we drew instead
an armless mannequin
with hooded eyes
and paced by the windows
that seemed so much more freeing
than the dark studio
filled by people i'd never know.

through the dreary city
my father drove me home
and i never did become an artist
of a visual medium
though i never imagined i would be.

