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Lavabo

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Lavabo

by Ryan G. Van Cleave

Lavabo n. 1. *RC Ch.* a. the ritual washing of the celebrant's hands at the offertory of the Mass. b. a towel of basin used for this. 2. a monastery washing-trough. 3. a wash-basin.

I wash my hands in innocence,
and go about thy altar, O Lord,
singing a song of thanksgiving.
—Psalm 26:6

wellspring illuminated
by wheat-colored light
these pages of water
such geometric beauty
of ultramarine blue
the mother lode of secrets
potent crossroads

how madonna lilies float
sudden flowers that shiver
atop the water's face
like a soul side-stepping
death or the mysterious
corpus of sin, its viscera
like a bed of thorns

in starry feather-swirls
the long curve of silence
scars can be drowned
their desolate summits
given one more chance
renewed strength of its origins
here in the eternity of foam