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Sub Rosa

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Elton Glaser

SUB ROSA

At the end of the book of heaven,
that black hole to which all light
aspires and escapes, a white rose
closes over the Virgin and the Florentine
and other emigrants from earth, odor
so sweet it purges and embalms,
a swoon of virtue in a pure retreat.

At bone level, below the rose, it's
nothing more than more of nothing:
an owl looks down, yellow beacon of its eyes
tracking the little sacs of fur and fear
that pant through a plunge of moonlight
to dim woods, sanctum where some shadow lies,
licking the bloodstink from its claws.