

The Guitar Lesson

Momus

The pupil is twelve, attractive, withdrawn
In a midnight blue school uniform
Lips just a little too full for her face
Distant eyes full of space
In her posture no trace of coquette
No defiance

She fingers the frets looking forlorn
Crossing her legs where her tights have been torn
Starts as her mother comes into the room
And the afternoon grows still
And her mother feels chill
Shivers and buttons her coat

I gently correct the curve of her back
And open her book in the now-empty flat
At the classical piece I've had her prepare
And her arms are bare as she plays
And I draw back behind her ear
A few strands of hair gone astray

She shows me her bracelet, the lesson is done
I turn it around between finger and thumb
We sit face to face and it seems to me that
Her face is the face of a cat
And touching the place where her breasts will be
I press my hand flat

She comes into my lap, I turn her around
Her hands clasp my neck and her feet skim the ground
Her skirt travels up under my palm
But the pupil sits looking so calm
As if listening to the distant sound
Of a burglar alarm

What happened next it's hard to recall
The guitar lesson left no traces at all
Now, from afar, it seems to resemble
A strange composition in oil
Of a man, a guitar, and an innocent little girl