

## **Pulling Down the Sky**

*(the Sistine Chapel)*

Piece by piece the sky was hacked, the star-flung heaven made years before,  
its sheen of gold & ultramarine. And the firmament turned to pigmented dust  
that caked & stained their forearms & necks & rained down in wide, benedictory arcs  
into the space below. It grew dark, of course, & they worked torch-lit  
& a man said *plaster, bucket*. A man said *scaffold, whore*. And the hammers  
mauling the sky from that height swallowed up the sounds from below:  
a robed boy scurrying from the candles, the sunset vesper thrum.  
And when they rested, they saw the ruin they had made & knew what was needed  
would be done. To pull down the entire barrel vault blue, each starred with  
of heaven. To prepare the space where the sky had been for, yes, a god  
& the shapes of god. Of cloth, a mule, a knuckle. An axe, a bowl, some bread.