

**Portrait of the Artist
in an Orthopaedic Halo Crowned with Flowers**

She lives next door to dying
In a shack of bones,
A gorgeous spirit furnishing
That worst of homes.

A votive flame, she celebrates
The air she burns.
A flowering halo subjugates
Her crown of thorns.

Her eyes– Amontillado
In the brimming glass–
Look straight into the Angel's.
But he will not pass.

Anne Stevenson, *Poems 1955-2005* (Bloodaxe Books, 2005), with permission of the publisher on behalf of the author; www.bloodaxebooks.com