

## Adam Crothers

### O Valentine

Master of love and much-loved mystery, in short.  
You denied yourself, and like beads loosed from tassels  
the cap of each *i* let lavender and thistle  
sprout from its neck, to wilt upon each soft pale shirt,

teaching by strange example that the human heart  
is as much a network of rooms as a muscle,  
is as much an altar draped in bells and mistle-  
toe as an instrument whose strings sing of souls hurt.

Blind, dumb, deaf upon the pedestal of a saint,  
by touch and instinct you descend to hide among  
the seeds spun by the breeze, between lines of sonnets,  
in the secret of the space behind the new moon.

And elsewhere, as deep as port, as rich as Tokaji,  
your head bobs in peace upon a heart's-blood bouquet.