

## METHOD ACTING

The apprentice marbler  
told me the old men,  
masters at this pastel

dissembling trade, advised  
he think of the stone  
as he paint (pine surface

primed, stick stripe borders  
ruled in with the thin brush)  
not as Michelangelo, who,

it's written, saw the way to cut  
free. No, his world, youngling,  
was to be in history's cross

section, the folded-in memory  
that marble held. Here water  
mattered, heat most pertinent,

the banding set in that first  
mineralizing segregation, to be  
deeply buried, (now his brush

flicked slower), in a giving in  
to pressure, recrystallization,  
the rock annealed to rose

translucence. Painting in  
random cracks, a necessary  
touch, comes last. He said

he was good, but lately short  
of breath, thinking of the dust,  
the stone sawers in the quarry.