

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA'S "RESURRECTION"

William Ojendyk

Forgive them, they have slept through your rearrival.
The guards tuck helmets, spears
close to their torsos, lulled by the olive grove's rustle.
Three of them, braced by fence brick
or stretched over dark dirt, armor chinking
against gravel. One covers his face from dusk light

with his palms. Like the crossed flag you bring,
your body floats. The arch of your spine
carries your chest, and your fist clasps the flagstaff
without rippling your forearms. No, Christ, the weight

is on your face, like roots holding down
the olive trees, and your brow's creases have stiffened.
Always you look past the soldiers' sleep,
sometimes peer at my apartment's
varnished shelves and cabinets, paint-smirched windows,
cedar doorframe and its stubble of dust;
and sometimes, watch blankly ahead,
wondering if it was all worth it.