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The Last Act

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THE LAST ACT

On the way out he chose war,
dashed the Emperor’s damned amphorae
with a short sword.

—She should have come on heavy,
breathing like slaves—he said,
considering her big Nile dugs,
her rivened ass.

Tony knew
that war is a green girl always
to fall back on,
to barely survive her thrashing,
her inexperience with tongues
(Octavian’s gift, snaking down the steps
like a purple robe to lie in).

He knew that foreplay’s the thing
to catch an aging queen
if you can end it.

RAMSES ADAMANT

Ramses said her verse
was divorced from her person, though
she breathed it like a camel.
Her body works its hip on the lectern;
her lower lip is hot
and her asp eyes
seek the faces before her
for one more oasis.