Susannah and the Elders

Ann Maureen Stotts
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SUSANNAH AND THE ELDERS
Ann Stotts

1.
Tintoretto saw her twice.
First with leg extended
toward a kneeling servant-
woman, other leg
bent, an act of balance.
To breast and belly
tilted in slow pivot as
with arm uplifted,
her fingers draw strands
of hair apart.
Dark eyes gaze at him
and her unknown beholders.

In the light of the open window,
behind the leaves, two conspirators
bend to receive the postured
beauty we take freely.

2.
Again, breasts and eyes
bending toward a propped
up looking-glass,
she joins with us
in looking at herself.
Augmented detail
like rays of sun on water.

As she curves toward it,
the dark glass blends
with the wall it leans against,
becoming the embankment
for her illuminated sea.
As she sees the two thin men
stalking from each side,
she turns back to the mirror again;
hers picture, theirs,
signifying nothing
as shocking as an unposed nude.

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