

Lisa Williams

Figural

Cezanne does not let him come beyond the paint.
That is its purpose—
to set a man there, thinking, before us,
the man's hands gripped as if they hold onto themselves.

That is its purpose
and nothing else—a body—
the man's hands gripped as if they hold onto themselves
composed of reds, browns, and golds

and nothing else—a body—
and inside one closed fist, blackness
composed of reds, browns, and golds
because that's what it is, flesh in a place

and inside one closed fist, blackness.
Even his hand resting on his thigh fights for its place
because that's what it is, flesh in a place
surly and impartial as the apples piled on the table beside.

Even his hand resting on his thigh fights for its place,
so much himself that we see him only,
surly and impartial as the apples piled on the table beside,
not ourselves, not him looking where we are.