

TO ANNUNZIATO THE CHEMIST

O Annunziato, you are mine for this moment—
Clear blue eyes of a choirboy, mouth twisted as if
Filled with bitter physic: your face a welcome murky spot
In this bright pharmaceutical fluorescence. To think
I waited impatiently for you, shifted from one
Foot to the other, ankles itching, waited irritatedly
For you to notice me standing at your little window!

But you, no, you are no boy at all; a full-grown
Man of thirty-five, trained in medic arts, caduceus
Twined and mounted behind the formica counter,
You look thin and sick yourself, that thick black
Shock of hair falls into a wasted face. Do you sit
At night in a less-well-lit room, pray over the bottle
Of morphine, needles gleaming, for more strength?

From your lips issues a voice of surprising roughness,
Depth. I flutter my eyelashes involuntarily—O respond,
(O why not?) answer with a brush of your wrist across
Mine, dark hair around the bone; don't just pass me
My anonymous white paper bag. *Please sign here, ma'am.*
I scrawl nothing, blinded. O see my name, O know me—
Annunziato, behold: if you were to come to me, apart,

A hovering pagan angel bringing pale green birth control
Pills (and I swear to you, I take them for bad periods only!),
Hosannahs of piped supermarket music lifting and wafting
Your lab coat without blemish in a fluted Gregorian wind,
If I alone could hear your strangled voice and see
Behind fringed lashes the smudged eyes you hide
From other dysmenorrhic female Rx customers,

Then should I tell my hysterical travails; then should you
Listen silently, mix powders in your mortar, hand me
The pouch I'd pocket in my skirts and in payment whisper:
Meet me in the orchard when the moon has risen, not these
(For they are) goddamned fluorescent tubes; there we shall
Dance, bare in purple air; there shall my pains be finally
Cured; and there—wild miracle, Annunziato—it may be there

Where we shall come across your own healed self as well.