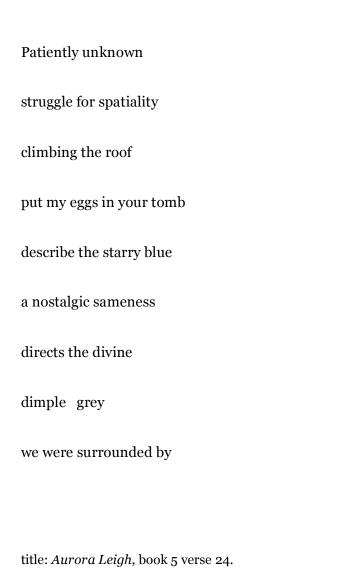
Heather Woods

Beyond our mortal? —can I speak my verse



The lion in me felt the keeper's voice

Her head takes shape Her shape shakes head

Her thoughts gain weight Holes overfed:

I was along the path looking for it and found you, not quite what I was stumbling towards—an infinite blue yes in her pocket! You know, the sort of thing you make a gelatin print of—A NEUTRAL NEURAL smile—flat-line, like the heart's gone out, explode red spring pumping through arteries, our trees open and close themselves as spring takes her first lick at it—

Off of me!

Or plant a word in my opening

title: Aurora Leigh, book 2 verse 561.

Wd. require raffia tinged with gold	
and much bending to	
see beyond	
I presented my flesh to you	
'But all in blots and fragments'	
blood drips	
in the singing brook	
fish billow glee	
to meet edges of water and air	
'—Echo answers where.'	
	"To throne such" p. 2/2 <no break="" stanza=""></no>

To throne such feet as yours, my prophetess,

"—echo answers why."

'from inner to outer'

'hot and hot.'

'the hand of the soul shakes.'

title: Aurora Leigh, book 5 verse 942.

quotes: EBB's letters.

Note:

AURORA, OH-ROAR-AH, 'the dark felt beautiful', is a modern poetic response to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Victorian epic, Aurora Leigh. The title of each poem is a line from Aurora Leigh. Borrowing from Aurora Leigh was at first a simple spark that led to an incantation of spirit. My own poetics typically surge from contemporary poetry that moves pictorially on the page, such as the sweeping poetry of Barbara Guest. I was shocked to have such a vibrant modern encounter with this very Victorian text. EBB lamented that she had very few literary 'grandmothers' whom she could turn to for inspiration and advice. Aurora Leigh is perhaps the first-born feminist Kuntslerroman: the story of a young woman poet seeking her poetic place (and a place for her poetics) in the world. The edition of Aurora Leigh that I referenced was the Norton Critical Edition

edited by Margaret Reynolds. Allusions from *Elizabeth Barrett Browning, The Life and Loves of a Poet*, by Margaret Forster.

A San Francisco Bay Area native, **Heather Woods** received her BA from Kenyon College and her MFA from the University of San Francisco. At Kenyon, Heather founded *Persimmons*, a literary magazine that is still flourishing today, and worked for four years on *The Kenyon Review*. Heather's poems have appeared in *Switchback* and are forthcoming in *Freehand*, and a collaborative article appears in *Jacket*. With Carla Hall Belmonte, Heather is translating one of Eugene Guillevic's last works, *Le Chant*.