

Face Value

Open the door with your left hand. Invert
your hands as you applaud. Turn the pages
right to left and write your letters upside
down. Then read the poet into the poem: I'll
write the reader out of the plot.

Substitute one thing for another because
you don't know if you can fix it. Begin there.

Dance around the blade or use it to cut
his wisdom from the rowan tree. Its ash
and silvered wings teach you how to fly.

Here, on line eleven you find some
meaning; Ariadne waited on Naxos
as black sails were set on Athens.

Find the thread. Question the latter then
weave it into a tapestry and watch the web
reveal itself to you. Grasp the final
strand just before it tangles; sever

it from the rest of the spool. Your fate was
determined by every choice you never had.

Now - watch scarabaeidae draw your profile
in antumbra. The snake, the raven or the
second door? An olive tree or a saltwater spring?

Whatever springs to mind first comes last.

Close the door behind you! Don't
leave the book unfinished; he'll start
again because you can't. You're alone
in his memory. Open the book
with your left hand or close the door
before you enter: you won't recognise
the lack of feeling. I welcome the nonsense.
The weight it carries sends me back home,
when the world had no worries.