POSTCARD MADONNA

After detail of El Greco’s La Sagrada Familia

What you see is my face encircled in a psychedelic nimbus,
jet black hair held in place under a lace mantilla, eyes downcast,
skin like cream, lips and robes stained the color of ripe berries.
What you don’t see is the infant held to my breast,
his fingers entwined with mine. I would show him to you,
but he’s been cropped from my story. He’s soil, cosmic dust, words on a page.
Call me Mare, for North Star, for bitter seas, for unshed tears.
EVE CLEARS HER GARDEN

Spring forced no life from the apple tree
so we took it down, dragging crown and trunk
to the yard for the boys to chop into logs.
Then the soil—taproots thick as wrists, severed
with pick ax and machete, rocks and clay
loosened with tines of hoe and pitch fork. Leaves,
sheaves of them bleaching under this year’s
brown ones, peeled away. Worms slid through sleek mud
as blade tips carved nearby. From a tide
of mulch, pale as a sprig of thyme, a snake
flashed its stripes like a dart, and I dropped the spade.

There is flawless blue where the tree
once reached. Verbena and asters now pink
the hill instead of old geometries,
those leafless branches. A sphinx moth, some kind
of flying serpent, takes wary sips from
rose, then phlox, then flies in my direction,
as if to reach the pith of me and my temptation.
The urge is to coax seedlings into vines,
to answer the call of minstrel goldfinch,
to open my throat’s hive and free the bees
that seem to buzz between each breath, each rib.