

## Thinking of Florence N.

Picking the shrapnel out of his back  
she remembered her mother's best china  
shattered in their Persian carpet.

"Be careful, so careful",  
was the warning in her head then,  
fingers moving in grooves as scalpel-precise.

The colors of this soldier's textures  
erupts more vividly with his flesh  
aromatic as char.

Suffering for suffrage,  
they forced her to drink some similar sludge once,  
not caring if the tube found a lung  
or punctured her spirit while stomach's fire  
regurgitated ash.

She'd have to be stronger to win freedom  
but a World War exploded amid those protests for votes.

Schooled in stoic usefulness, unsexed at last,  
the front's casualties tallied her talent at cost----  
piecemeal, each amputation, this leg, that arm.

Her current boy is out of the trench-broth  
and re-patched like a vase  
in the kiln of her hands.

Her mouth still tastes cinders though  
for every creation the Great Potter lost.