If a Lion Could Talk

It was only the dawn of the Christian movement, but Jerome was already wise to it—he knew that but for a man who is not a man trapped inside books would latter-day painters lose their perspective somewhere along the vanishing point.

So he tied his body to a great denial and scolded his widow patron’s daughter for the crampy hungers gathering in hers.
Leaving behind his ascetic theater he let his rags polish the floors as he delighted in the intercourse of a little night reading.

The dog-faced lion played along, shedding the sweaty mane-cape, rewarded each night for his loyalty with a bowl of kibble.

Jerome gazed out of the casement at a beautiful scene, stars fanning the cool expanse of lapis desert dome, and chuckled to himself, “No one paints a saint
in a great library
built through the pilfer
of a pious widow’s gold.”
A scholar, he knew
that sainthood, just like
good translation,
requires a bit of
finger pointing,
and some ethically
questionable
sleight of hand.
Druthers

I would rather run a butter knife
Through Ruskin’s uncut pages
Than under the lip of a stuck tack.

I would rather come under a hand
That’s apt to undo me than be
Buttonholed by a walking dictionary.
And the Angels Sing

The burden of heaven
grips me in your bite—
it's not right
but what can I do? Your
grin plucks such unthink-
able melodies into being
my eardrum can hardly
take it. Tunes that build
sandcastle beauties in
my conch, straight out
of Architectural Digest.
I can't afford it, the angelic
definition of your
distracting smile, without
being thrown out on
my heel, dazed by
trumpet-playing ninnies
in unisex robes who blow
on cue like Xavier Cugat
in *You Were Never Lovelier*.
I’m lost. One glint off
the white of your incisors
and I’m whisked inside
the celestial philharmonic,
deaf to all necessities
of this mortal slip.