

Penelope

by Cortney Bledsoe

My friends turn to pigs, truffling leaves
around a woman who doesn't eat
pork, while you, cunning weaver, avoid rape

calling itself love. Always, you wait,
and have always waited in my mind, while I'm
off inking my name into the annals of history

pretending to be a beggar. That's as I should be,
begging for your lilies. You wanted to die,
wanted to inflame your would-be lovers by showing

them the orchid you'd kept from the sun for twenty
years while I played man amongst the swine.
The greatest quest I undertake will be the search

for forgiveness, for a secret path into your breast
past the gates I've despoiled with my ego.