Starting With Poseidon

Medusa, cunning queen of Gorgons,
You arrest me with your silent stare and scream,
Frozen for all grisly time on a shield
To fright the enemies of your enemy.

Once you were gorgeous, attracted Poseidon to your side,
And heedless in the arms of a god
Consummated your love in a temple to Athene.

Pregnant with his offspring you were hunted down
By the goddess of wisdom and war,
Who transformed your countenance,
Made you moon-faced,
Snubbed your nose,
Bulged your eyeballs,
Turned your nails to claws,
Filled your mouth with crooked teeth and lolling tongue,
Gave you snakes for hair,
A visage so gruesome
You turned astonished mortals attracted by your gaze
To stone.

I stare at that shield of green
Transformed with painter’s art
From convex to concave, while your head
Amazed with vipers appears suspended,
Detached from shield, from body,
Almost from life.

Discovered lounging among statues of former admirers,
Perhaps you see your reflection in Perseus’s polished shield,
Hear the hiss of swirling snakes,
Feel, taste, and smell the gore,
Blood dripping like icicles,
But no sound can you utter.

Tricked by Perseus abetted by Athene,
Captured by Caravaggio
At the exact moment you could tell the world
What