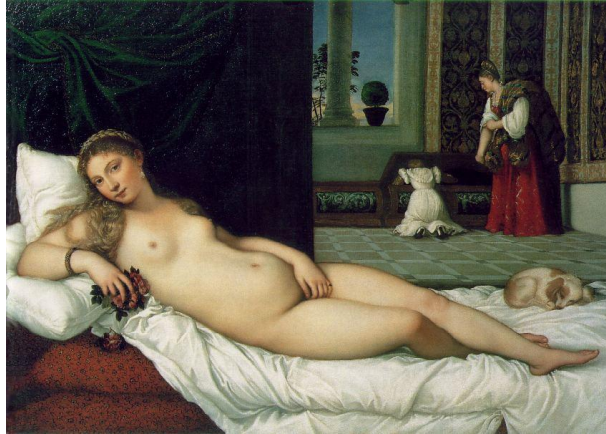


## vii. Signor Tiziano's Creation

(Titian, Venus of Urbino.)



In the summer evening light  
she lies before her long awaited guest  
with calm unguarded elegance

and a generous rump, clothed in white,  
protrudes from the finely painted chest  
with sweet incongruence.

An imperious bared arm,  
framed by the colonnaded tapestry,  
demands the requisites of modesty  
to be produced – *'This instant! Right now!'* -  
as her child, naked with finely arched brow,  
reclines on the crumpled clean white sheet.

May I fervently and proudly greet  
the one whose wisdom and benevolence  
welcomes me to this enchanting scene.

Signor Tiziano has my confidence  
as I have his. He knows my ways.  
He is not aggrieved if my gaze  
hovers discreetly between  
our heroin's alluring thigh  
and that dearest little friend  
at her feet, appetisingly curled.

He has no intention to offend  
when he asks, with a patient sigh,  
if the curtain might be left unfurled  
and I sadly accept  
that my watchful eye  
might be out of place  
hovering above the lady's breast.

As I am politely swept  
by the curtain's solemn grace  
into obscurity, my vision lingers  
on the lady's languid fingers  
brazenly at rest.

I accompany the lady and her smile  
down all the years  
as we hover with good-natured guile  
on the Uffizzi Palace wall  
till a lonely messenger appears.

Standing barefoot on the marble shore  
between the world's beginning and the end,  
I see you longing for the soothing call  
of light hearted love.

You savour with elation,  
my solitary friend,  
Signor Tiziano's creation  
enticingly at play  
with the earth below and skies above,  
teasing the wounded and the strong  
in the elegantly gathering dust.

I see how, in your loneliness, you long,  
with amiable lust  
and with the famished way  
of flesh and blood,  
to be passionately named,  
love's long awaited food -  
tender worshipful and unashamed.