MARYLyn Monroe in omaha

How Marilyn got to Omaha, I'm not certain, but there she was standing in the kitchen, wearing Grandma's WPA apron, frying bacon.

"Hey," I said. She looked up from her work at the stove and said, "Hey. Over easy?" "You bet," I said, and she served them up, bacon, eggs the way I like, hash browns, toast with butter. And lots of hot coffee, which she drank, too, sitting at the kitchen table in early fall, late on a Sunday afternoon.

"What you doing here," I asked. "In the kitchen?" "Why Omaha? You're here. How else am I to see you?" "Making bacon and eggs," I said, marveling. "Because your mother died and her mother. I'm a woman. I had a mother. I'm dead," she said by way of explanation. She was right: it was soothing having her here. I would have never guessed it, Marilyn pouring coffee into my cup here in Omaha.

I got to thinking, people don't know Marilyn, just hang their own clothes on her. "I played my part in it," she said smiling, and I noticed as her lips met the coffee cup that they were regular lips. "When men saw them," she said, suddenly, "they thought of their cocks."

I was shocked. "You're pretending," she said, and I had to agree. "But what does this have to do with my mother?" I asked,
and she shrugged that shrug of hers, only now
I saw it was an I-don't-know shrug not
a breast-hiking shrug so men would notice,
though it might be that, too.

"We're both dead," she offered. "Dasein.
Heimat. Dwelling," she continued, recalling Heidegger,

"We learn from the dead," paraphrasing Hölderlin.

So we do, I thought, andenken, my mother's cascade
of words, rain over the falls, generation
after generation into the ultimate silence.

Marilyn came around the table to hug me.
It was not like hugging a star. It was not
hugging a sex goddess. She was no bimbo.
Her dress stayed down; breasts have many uses.
"Heimat," I repeated and I felt her head nod.

We were two women, in embrace,
the dead giving life to the living,
along the auseinandersetzen.