

Portrait of a Lady

I don't want to tell you, but
there is a lady I know who
begs from door to door and
not for money or food or shelter,
but for a clue as to who she is.

Weeping, I try to help her,
to sing a lullaby of the self I see,
but she cannot sit still
long enough to listen,
and even if she did,
her pin-pointy blue irises
set in shock-treatment Valium eyes
could not receive my offering.

Talking in high-pitched hawkish
raspy, pleading-timbered voice,
she cannot see or hear me;
her ears tune out when her mouth stops,
as if on another planet,
replete with impenetrable metallic
spacesuit and
one-way radio.

Cornelia C. Hornosty
Dundas, Ontario