

DENISE BERGMAN

Camoufleur

German Expressionist painter Franz Marc created nine tarpaulin camouflage covers, assuming that those in the style of Kandinsky would be the most effective against aircraft flying at 2000 meters or higher.

Art masters, you'd think,
would cautiously
mete out their talent, deal it
ace by king
in lucky breaks, not treacherous
losing streaks.

Blue Rider, swashbuckling
the blind forest,
trampling hens-and-chicks sedum,
moss clumped on your horse's
ivory hooves
you trekked vale to battlefield.
Was there no better
use of your palette—slippery blue,
green jest, brown fleck—
than the flickered delusion
under which we hide
disguised,
hide, as time rearms,
as arsenals rearm
with time?

Franz!
mocking Wassily's blue circle, red square,
forging your friend's serpentine
black line—
war steals then fences provenance,
smears charcoal deceit
while behind a studio's primed
stretched canvas
or in a field under draped raw cloth
a horse whinnies
and its belly growls.