LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

Short Story on a Painting of Gustav Klimt

They are kneeling upright on a flowered bed
He has just caught her there
and holds her still
Her gown has slipped down off her shoulder
He has an urgent hunger
His dark head bends to hers hungrily
And the woman the woman
turns her tangerine lips from his
one hand like the head of a dead swan draped down over
his heavy neck
the fingers strangely crimped tightly together
her other arm doubled up against her tight breast
her hand a languid claw clutching his hand
which would turn her mouth to his
her long dress made of multicolored blossoms quilted on gold
her Titian hair with blue stars in it

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And his gold
harlequin robe
checkered with
dark squares

Gold garlands
stream down over
her bare calves &
tensed feet

Nearby there must be
a jeweled tree
with glass leaves aglitter
in the gold air

It must be
morning
in a faraway place somewhere

They
are silent together
as in a flowered field
upon the summer couch
which must be hers

And he holds her still
so passionately
holds her head to his
so gently so insistently
to make her turn
her lips to his

her eyes are closed
like folded petals

She
will not open

He
is not the One