Lacquered

Lauren Hilger
The forest is nothing but Brechtian scaffolding. —Spencer Reece

A woman with
two fortune
cookies unopened
atop her cart. Her
hair white as a
world of ice. This
is my last memory
of New York.

Here in Houston we’re looking at a redhead
in a bib from
the 1600s, a
portrait. What
is the word for
this type of
mortality?

The painting I pass asks me, Do you want something crisp to bring
along? Two green apples? Some tough velvet, a skull, an hour glass?

I don’t remember how to read music,
how to sit at a lacquered piano,
though rosin’s smell is still with me.

How sudden then, as I turn to swoon out of my body, nearly, could
have, felt. My brain angry at lack of control.

What did Dostoevsky smell before his body betrayed him?
Oranges?