A Portrait of the Gallery as a Young Genome

"In my view, all that is necessary for faith is the belief that by doing our best we shall come nearer to success and that success in our aims (the improvement of the lot of mankind, present and future) is worth attaining.”   
 - Rosalind Franklin

In this white room, we won’t tiptoe outside the frames

of its genes because a picture isn’t even half the story.

A picture isn’t all seeing, a panoptic for all people, hardwired,

like instructions for life, into 500 views from Richmond Bridge

spanning a magnitude of absence hiding in plain sight, coiled tight

into the spines of women with no faces. Queens, nurses, duchesses

and princesses in bustles…always someone else’s wife, mute

and biddable gripped in static oils, in the sepia of daguerreotypes.

Outside, the Cedar of Lebanon misses its roots but knows home’s

a story of people, not places with gilded ceilings in sumptuous palaces.

So in this bright room, the matrix of architecture snakes like the river

in that picture by one Peach sister, a double helix twisting back,

with Rosalind’s ocular proof, to look at its former selves: the neglected

and forgotten also need their own cabinets and careful preservation.

In an infinity of common ground in this bright, white room, our base pairs

clasp hands across a ladder of limitless cell divisions because evolution

may be random but survival should not rely on chance.