The monk floats.  
His poplar jaw opening  
in prayer, the left arm  
lifts, cross in hand.  
A blessing, rote action  
without actor.  
The right hand beats  
the chest each time.  
He turns his head right  
then left.  
Kisses the cross.  
Beneath the robes, iron  
clockworks shift and turn,  
put into motion  
by a secret lever.  
Each supplicant in new  
solitude bends to the absence  
of breath as the mechanical  
monk turns to begin again.  
Who needs the body?

II.

Robots can do almost anything you please.  
They are up on sexual favors, cordless vacuuming,  
and martyring themselves by bomb.
Less effective at deep-tissue massage; excellent at listening to senior citizens. Working on parking your car.

What the future brings is nothing we haven’t seen, this quest to be little gods and make what will do our bidding.

The medieval monk who doled out benedictions arose from a human dream and was then fathered by a clockmaker.

The real monk now sits alone in the back room, smokes a cigar, enjoys a glass of whiskey— he’s outsourced the job.

The real monk is on the dole.

The real monk is waiting in the parking lot for offers of day labor.

The real monk is hunting and gathering.

The real monk is unloading boxes at Costco.

The real monk sits in the factory, building himself by hand.