THE FIRST OF THAT NAME

Regina Buccola

How comforting it must be for you
to have a mother who lost her head
long before she could assign one to you.
Daughter of a whore, you had no need
to whore yourself to any,

though some say you tried many,
found all of them wanting in your
eyes, or those of your wise councilors,
and thus you reign, sole, anointed
Elizabeth, the first of that name.

Have you forgot me? Though
you never knew me, certain it is
you knew of me. Every time
you walk with regal step
beneath those carved Tudor roses

I should be twinned to your thoughts,
the first rose of that branch,
thornless, whose blooming
made your stock possible:
Elizabeth Tudor, first of that name.

Named for my mother, whored
to a king (as some would have it)
whose brother-king asked her to
twist me to him, niece-wife;
she saved me by binding me to his thorn.