

**Bather**  
marble

Jean Antoine Houdin 1782

It is these hardened lines, and not so much  
the distance from me to you  
or the casual others passing your  
chiseled beauty that holds us back;  
and it is not fair that so many allow themselves

careless glances upon your nakedness,  
for there is no coat to shield you from their cold looks,  
no silk garment to cover your polished pale loins,  
and no callused heart to protect your pride.  
But what is it that hides beneath the layers?  
Your bowing head is shy and sad,

but there is nothing to be ashamed of! You cannot help  
but be on display,  
and is rightfully so, with grace and patience  
as enduring as yours. Yet my love  
will not endure as long as you. I feel you in there,  
and all I can do is sit, as you do, holding in my  
yearning for you like stone.

*Chris Burkhardt*