

Mosaic artwork from 149th Street subway station by José Ortega for MTA Arts for Transit


# Wild Orchids

**Katha Pollitt (b. 1949)**

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*At the foot of a rock, bamboo and orchids,  
small furred flowers that hold themselves aloof  
from the mist that is everywhere.*

*You have left newspapers, indolent  
quarrels over Sunday-morning coffee  
to come to the museum with your lover*

*and admire these swirls  
swept onto paper by an old monk  
in less than ten minutes six hundred years ago  
depicting the orchid,  
which signifies the virtues of the noble man:  
reticence, calm, clarity of mind.*

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