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The Patient Saint

Frances McCue

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FRANCES MCCUE

The Patient Saint

I know I have a body.  
In this bone tangle, heart  
wrung from the dropped  
hearth of ribs, caught in  
fireworn wrangles of ash  
brought back. No Eve  
am I, just flesh sent  
a long way, intact.

From inside, my body caves  
to wrapped marrow—  
joint and splint. What  
place of rich winds,  
spin and flinch  
of blood-culled gutterways  
brings this desert—  
skull, mites like  
lichened fossils? A mote’s  
slow drop into a river  
bile and brine,  
twined to rib and bone?

Cold outside, my cage  
fires within though  
I’m slow to fist,  
quick in blood gone thin.  
I’m counting: white, red, white.  
Fringe dust and spores,  
washed edges of a ravine  
dropping nonetheless  
into the sea. Silt, slough  
the residue of salts  
or some other. Wither.