

K. A. HAYS

Psalm against a Rapture

The monks are on a pilgrimage, swinging uphill
on tired feet. At the summit they pass into a chapel,
panting, folding into the pews' embrace.

They want nothing but seats for torsos,
air for lungs, water for lips and throats.
They murmur thank you, thank you.

Below, the boys playing soccer in the piazza
chase the ball's gray halo, flip it
between clenched feet. They are keeping it

out of their hands. If you look closely,
white seeds hover over all of this. They spread out.
They curl up in squalls and are carried away.

I imagine they'd just as soon shimmy into the dust
between cobblestones. Like the monks they idle.
Like the boys they glide. But they feel nothing.

Lord, if you hear, I am a monk and a boy—
I want to idle and glide here always.

The weeds on the path and the fountains in the squares
are rapture enough. No peace in being the seeds
that take off for the clouds, and neither shrug nor nod.