

JENNIFER MILITELLO

A Dictionary of the Garment

It came to me without warning.
It came to me coated with wax.
It came to me threaded with silk.
It came to me in wolf's clothing.

It was like a crown that claimed my land.
Like sand, it slipped through the fingers.

It lasts like a pack of dogs.
It barks the gods to madness,
it fraternizes with beasts,
it sniffs the precious scenery from the stars.
It is more tropical than the godless should be.
It is excellent/contagious with gardens.

It has the blood's tiny fires and it stokes them
into the face that absence has been blossoming.
It would parade itself before the world.
It has the whistle of a young boy walking the fields.

It was fitted with agitation and a hippocampus:
it would kneel before those overthrown.
It would moan like trees in rain.
An epiphany. A flourish. An axis overdone.

In my isolation, I could not get it to form.
The clay was wrong. The stakes were low.
I moaned too much. There was a beauty like the world.

I felt my own charm.
I felt myself go tin.
I felt myself listen at the keyhole
for whatever in the room was whispering.

Winds cried out. I had doubt as my dark.
I had harps strung with barbed wire. I had pyres
to burn the living since winter is for the dead.

It ends here at the autopsy. A Pentecost fossilized like snow.
a mere sleeve rolled up to expose the arm,
shot through with muscle and light's ferned bruise,
shot through with the grip and its steady alarm.