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SARA HENNING

Self-Portrait as Woman Who Walks Straight into the Light

*how when he found me,
weeks later, he would find me like that,
an ordinary woman who could rise
in flame, all he would have to do
is come close and touch me.*
—Dorianne Laux, “Fast Gas”

Any moon can gleam like an agent of God, burn
itself naked. Torch itself holy. But it takes a Wolf moon
to blitz the night new. The stars are mourning women,
lacquered in black. But once, these stars like fireflies, churned—

Photinus carolinus. Dead,
awakened: their bodies flash a language of yearning.
I’ve watched them, learning. But here, at the edge of gesso,
a woman walks. The moon’s a lover coaxing

her into its brass rapture, its liquid touch.
Behind her, a crashed ambulance floats. Strobes
glimmer like blood on the river. A man drowns,

believing stars are the dead returned to us.
It’s true: any moon can gleam like an agent of God.
But this woman, burning? Watch her rise in flame.

*Sara Henning is the author of **Burn** (Southern Illinois University Press, 2023), **Terra Incognita** (Ohio University Press, 2022), and **View from True North** (Southern Illinois University Press, 2018). She was awarded the 2015 Crazyhorse Lynda Hull Memorial Poetry Prize, the 2019 Poetry Society of America’s George Bogin Memorial Award, First Prize in the 2020 Allen Ginsberg Poetry Award (Passaic County Community College), and a Tennessee Williams Scholarship in poetry to the 2019 Sewanee Writers’ Conference. She is an assistant professor of English at Marshall University.*



Nicole Lawrence, *Walking Hospital* (2020)