

MELANIE PIERLUIGI

DEATH IN A ROMANIAN MONASTERY

Body like wild sedge, a deer gutted, pink tongue hanging.
Your sins will eventually submit. It's inevitable.

Their intentions were good. When they tied you down,
the sisters' heads bowed in their black hoods like covered hawks.

Chains held around your legs and arms
as though your chest could seal shut.
Lips airtight holes, leaves like stretched insects.

The priest scattered holy water from his sleeves
as if salvation were a handshake, a reminder,
something left to grasp and shake.

But you can't be brought back
with words or prayers. Your limbs
have already unzipped inside their clothing,

a calm shuffling of your mouth before closing.

TURBULENCE

Yes, there will be turbulence.
Light from the wing will tip

so to spread our bones wide open.

The birches below look like soldiers
swaying purposeless, necks stretched

to see further. Stalactite homes,
streets disappearing in wide turns.

The turbid limbs of passenger's pause
to hold a water bottle steady.

The exits, the long aisles,
the stewardess composed and ready.