


Absconditum



I never steal candy from the checkout aisle, but once
I stole a saint's beard from a reliquary and used it
to dust the chandeliers. I confess that I lie, but not

when I say I replace hymns with harlequin romances
so my praise might have more longing. Wouldn't God
like that, staring at me with eyes green as a sapling

stripped for a switch? Lately, I'm happy to be alive,
so happy I steal communion grape juice from the church
kitchen and use it to fill my flask. I confess pleasure

bullies God's name to my lips all the time, and I repent
with equal fervor and Eucharists I brought from home.
Christ hangs on through each of my baptisms, bored

that the narrative of my shame leaves out the exposition
and spends too much time on the climax. I steal him
from the wall because I admire the way objects cannot

suffer. When I ask his painless body what tempts him,
what misdemeanors he favors, wind slithers into
hymnals and offers me paragraphs black as apples.