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The Sacrament: Apostles

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THE SACRAMENT: APOSTLES

Alexander Scalfano

I.

alone in my skull there is only a blue sun that never sets on the irradiated bones
the scurry of scavengers makes shadows play on the ruins
unsettles the ashes in my lungs

I hold my heart under the lake water to wash the oil from its feathers
a black lacquered headdress of alien feathers I wear on feast
days for the god of wishes, the god of little twilights,
the god of lost birds, the god of summer discord

this ritual is about forgetting

and forgiveness

this ritual is vacation from the lost planet

this ritual is apology to your hands who love me

I want you to hold me under the lake until a new god claims me

II.

the lake slides to my vision like a pearl bracelet breaking from a girl’s wrist
like the shadow cast from a loom in Okayama

like a sprig of lavender suspended in a cup of tea
I was sure I could love you regardless

when the wind cupped my face with both its hands and said gently:
“it's not against you I’m breaking”

and each wave on the lake

(because it’s a day for things to imagine they are larger than themselves)

was a tongue curling around the word “feel”

and I’m as stunned as the oriole in the wind’s hair,
out of season, the wrong color now

where is summer?

I came to the lake to hide the water sign of when our hands touch

not the fire of a new skin

something soft

a bit of me I don’t hate in
an oil glaze of my being

I came to the lake to wash it away for you

something the moon might ladle onto your sleeping face
how else could you love me like this?

and the wind against the window

a sister to your kindness

ALEXANDER SCALFANO is originally from northern Alabama and graduated from UMass Amherst’s MFA in Poetry program. He currently teaches English and Creative Writing at Dublin School in the mountains of southern New Hampshire where he is also the founding editor of the school’s arts magazine, Layman’s Way. Some of his poems appear in Atticus Review, Cosmonauts Avenue, New South, smoking glue gun, and Jellyfish.