the only cloud for me

Patrick Holian
THE ONLY CLOUD FOR ME

Patrick Holian

the peach edict: we are in a thing together.
my treachery replaces my cancellations.

there, a beautiful, barren plain. my kind marrow
but not, like, in a romantic way

or whatever. the swan will call you and i
back without mercy, which is a kind of mercy.

in the swells something nameless prowls, in the moonlight’s teeth,

swells, prowls, swells again. beneath some table, speaking of which,
i etch a not unkind devotional: a boat,

a brown cat, a meal in quiet, a bottle
of wine. light breaks upon a clearing—we are light—

the choir sings about long winters, old whales,
what it’s like to sit in the rafters whispering

baseball lineups and the best way to parcel
out the rowing—we are light—when your limbs, heavy—

in the swells, something wonderful prowls, morning comes,
unravel our olive year, call forth, call home, sleep.
PATRICK HOLIAN is a Mexican-American writer from San Francisco, California. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from St. Mary’s College of California and a PhD in English from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. His fiction and poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in Suburban Diaspora, Mosaic Art & Literary Journal, Arkansas Review, Black Warrior Review, Gigantic Sequins, Oculus Vox, and Whiskey Island Review. Patrick was a semi-finalist in the 2017 American Short[er] Fiction contest, a finalist in the 2019 Ploughshares Emerging Writer’s contest, and was recently a runner-up in the Black Warrior Review’s 2019 flash fiction contest.