

**TRACI BRIMHALL**

**Come Trembling**

In the country where believers eat the bodies  
of the gods, we meet a priest who pulls a rope  
of thorns through his tongue to make his mind

pure enough for a vision. He dances to music  
we can't hear and waits to come trembling  
into knowledge. We don't recognize ourselves

in his radiance, but we do in his suffering.  
He passes through pain and into healing without seeing  
the holy rendered visible. He tells us the oracle died

when she refused to divine the future,  
but we find her tangled in her own hair wearing  
a garland of feathers and burrs, manacled to the bed.

We ask for a better world to die in, but she says,  
*Submit to your freedom.* We tie new knots in her hair  
and celebrate the feast of the dead gods

and the festival of the living. We hold matches  
to a bush, but it will not speak. Rumors say  
the secret of life is sewn into a dead man's coat,

but when we unearth him, all we find in his sleeves  
are his fractured arms. We want to believe,  
to split open the myth and lie in it, return

to original dark and be changed, but the bones  
won't yield to us, the gods remain so quiet  
we hear water speaking between the stones.