

TRACI BRIMHALL

Shuttle and Loom

It happened suddenly: the novice carried off
by a gentle madness as the other women sat weaving.
In the tapestry, angels played with their serpents.

Where once they embroidered hounds given a dead rabbit
to know the scent of the animal they hunted, women now
sewed a bomb to a man who measured its ticking

with quarter notes. It could save him if he sang it,
but he didn't want to survive the pain that made him.
The novice spun thread to reorder his stars.

She wanted flowers to take back the gods they birthed.
To paint over the walls muraled with unsolved mysteries.
She wanted to rescue a man from his sadness,

but she kept saving herself, kept seeking the paler loves,
waiting for a naked stranger to stroll through the courtyard,
his skin dappled by the night shadows of the persimmon trees.

She was stitching more minutes into the bomber's song
to deliver him from his fervor when the darker joy
found her, the wound and its ecstasy unfinished.