

ANTHONY BORRUSO

**Diagnosis: Thelonius Monk**

Give it to me straight. Give it to me ugly,  
flopping, a half-dead fish, or forged  
in the Devil's drunken hand. Let me know

how it is—Misfortune with no chaser,  
no lemon, no salt, no rounded numbers  
or mulled words. Give me your loose-lipped

sutra, your honeypot cudgel, your pleasant  
discord, and crystallized twang. Enter the room  
with atonal swag and admit that the cancer

crackles in me like a bonfire at twilight.  
Tell me I'm sick. Knot the G clef  
'round my neck and slick back my hair

in mortal preparation. For weeks,  
I've prayed for delicious recidivism, the night-  
flower has tip-toed to my window,

heavy with whispers and a sibilance  
that tickles the ear, slows the blood.  
Mr. Monk, I'm all mixed-up, shaken

by your thump, and love has been  
squeezed from the mind's organ grinder.  
Outlandish, enamored, drunk on your

wobbly odyssey, your lumbering elephant  
grace, I place myself on your ivory altar  
and wait to be hammered home.