

Teresa Dzieglewicz

## St. Maria Goretti speaks to the girl

You don't want to hear this  
but you need to go back  
to the too-white walls  
of his efficiency, the vodka  
threaded sheets.

You need to open your mouth,  
no, not to fill it  
with thin-skinned roses of pardon  
but to pull,  
his mirrored headboard

from your throat.  
The next morning, when his legs slice  
across the king-sized bed, and he points  
like nothing happened,

to the painting,  
clock hanging like a beat-up bra  
from a solitary branch,

calls it *The Persistence of Time*,  
this time, I'm telling you, you speak.

Name it what it is.

*The Persistence of Memory*.  
Days soft as camembert,  
unable to push away  
ants from their ticking hands,  
memory from the body. Until



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this time, you speak. In this composition,  
you are not the bruised

fruit in the center. Ten years later  
a mirror beside your bed  
cannot make you cry.

It's true what you read.  
After I was raped,  
I sent roses,  
their hips wide with blossom.  
They weren't to bless him.  
No, I deserved to create  
something beautiful.  
I know they told you  
I'm the Saint  
of forgiveness.  
It's not him I'm telling you  
to forgive.

