Mid Century

Dion O'Reilly

Then a boy kissed me.

I loved how he'd leap a fence, disappear,
then drop from a tree with stolen art.

Blues LPs I'd never heard of—

Percy Mayfield, Johnny Otis,
a sound that proved suffering

stayed after suffering ended.

I loved the theft—coffee table books, soapstone statuettes,
small flutes of whittled wood.

I loved the way he wouldn't change,

and the way I did
because of what he gave me.

Yes, I loved his skin

when it vanished into greenery,
returned with the smell

of acacia and salt.
I loved how he trembled

like a small box of music.
Open your hand, he'd say. I have a gift.

Dion O'Reilly is the author of *Ghost Dogs* (Terrapin 2020) and *Sadness of the Apex Predator* (University of Wisconsin Cornerstone Press 2024). Her poems appear in *Narrative, Rattle, The Sun, Cincinnati Review, New Ohio Review,* and *The Slowdown.* She is a podcaster at The Hive Poetry Collective, leads poetry workshops, and is a reader for *Catamaran Literary Quarterly.* She splits her time between a ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains and a residence in Bellingham, Washington.

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