

Michelle Detorie

Wilfred's Needle¹

Imaging the womb of an ox. Imagine the thread —
toothless, eyeless — to move ahead
is to leave more behind. The snow is red

Where the ox was born. An ox survives the doom
of her own winter. An ox blooms
despite the chaste windows of these rooms.

This is where the ox lives — the hole she feeds,
the hole she reaches into, the hole she needs.
To make herself — to save herself — she weaves, she bleeds.

¹ A hole in a vault under Ripon Church through which chaste women might pass, others not.

Mistress Box

O, look her
wrist bones tethered
too, tight as a clock's
arms ticking from
their centers. See
her sit in the skitter-tocks
counting off the times
as the petals flock
their muscle-wings.
Pink and white
musk on their air spilled
from the lavender looms.
Their milk-silk loosened
like a spool of thread
used to sew the heaven-hem
back into its skin. Purple flap
of the sky-purse stitched flat
across a square latch, a trap-jaw
for the round tongue of her
fleshy catch — the bloom-bits
splotch-spread across her
center where the dangle-lock
of a silver key enters her titled nest.

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