**Sirocco**

Andrea Lewis

My son has a fever, a sign he does not love me enough. His physician arrives, then a priest. My husband is elsewhere. Perhaps you have heard of him, the well-respected architect.

Even here on the balcony, high above the flagstone path, above the sage and tarragon, one can smell the boy’s medicine. Even the bronze Etruscan leopard frowns. Even the dressmaker won’t come back.

A sirocco, a greedy wind from the edge of Africa, is on its way. Eager to attack. Seeking out a place behind my eyes to push its fireworks and pinwheels and leave behind its pain.

Below the balcony, the priest is leaving, opening the gate. His black cassock rides the first hot gust. Now he is a swift, writing my sins on the stretched blue sky, threading his dark wings through cypresses that toss their heads into the onrushing air.

Siroccos are born dry in the Sahara. They gather moisture as they cross the straits. They gather time and regrets. Old arguments and hurts. They have the power to rearrange the sky. To turn it red. To suffocate the boy. Or––why not? ––to conjure the architect and place him at the gate.