Animus

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Animus
Luisa A. Igloria

It comes floating up from the depths:
trailing scarves of pond scum, ancient
body flaccid now but the old hate still
flashing dully in a few umber scales. Once

I bent my head to drink from the green
waters, and with the first swallow
was betrothed. I was not taken away
to a kingdom of glass and mirrors,
to a country where night was changed by
day. My life was a spell: a series of small,
daily surrenders. My captor taught me
of anger, how fists find hollows in walls.

I was not supposed to stand in the way:
was meant to give and bend, lie still, let
the ordinary life settle over me as a fine
net fallen on every surface. I look my terror
in the eye and ask what brings him out of the old,
dank silence; how much of his own life remains.

Luisa A. Igloria is one of two co-winners of the 2019 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry open competition for her manuscript Maps for Migrants and Ghosts (Southern Illinois University Press, fall 2020). In 2015 she was the inaugural winner of the Resurgence Poetry Prize, the world’s first major award for ecopoetry. Other works include The Buddha Wonders if She is Having a Mid-Life Crisis, Ode to the Heart Smaller than a Pencil Eraser—winner of the 2014 May Swenson Poetry Award—and twelve other books. She teaches in the MFA Creative Writing Program at Old Dominion University, which she directed from 2009-2015.