1973

A in Black

Linda T. Lombardo

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A IN BLACK

You could tell it was suicide when the black skirt stepped out of her closet.
It fit her body like a slap.
She would stop washing her hair; it darkened
in clumps stuck on her skull.
Black shoes, a black sweater—she looked
more and more like a nun.

She knew black was the purest
color, the absence of color, the warmest,
not evil or frightening, but reliable.
It helped her think.
It helped her live on the edge
of a razor, of a tenement roof,
of a rough, beckoning sea.

Dressed like this she would face
the death temptation for days,
every second a prayer
that it come soon, clean and quick,
that she be worthy of it,
that it be kind to her, Death’s sister,
Death’s constant companion.