

The Violent Woman

Joseph Fisher

Sarah your clarinet
body squeaks at the valves, moans
off key, and lying still
and flat as a paper doll
in the cool of night
something hard as wire
scrapes through your belly.

I tell you now—
it is that violent woman
who guts out the girl,
strips her clean away
like pumpkin innards, rinses
her out monthly in blood.

Sometimes your body
will break you like kindling.
There is no apology
for this. But other days,
every limb, every cell,
every burning atom,
will hum like sunlight.