

Orion's Confessions

*You, tiny specks on Gaea's ground, squirming like ants,
gaze up at me as if my vague outline enchants*

*the Fates' library of threads,
and as if I steady the writhing worries in your heads.*

*Each night, I aim my arrow at a woman in red curls
who languishes in her car, clutching a baby girl:*

*"Give us a life worth living," she whispers to my face,
and when she dozes in the passenger seat, I pace*

*among the haze and heavens black—
to Gemini and Cancer and Virgo and back.*

*When her daughter cries, she jolts awake in fear,
and when she looks up, I know she mistakes my tears*

*for shooting stars; I cannot tell her that my belt
cinches this body and obeys threads the Fates dealt;*

*these stars are balls of fire that simply dance and spin—
I am made of hay and straw, of urine and cheap gin.*

*I feel I have deceived her trust instead of won
it justly (she does not know I am a poor man's son);*

*you, woman with red hair and green eyes,
who tosses her faith up to the sky*

*and rocks the future in her arms,
look at me as if I can charm*

the life you attempt to defend—

*but the belt that wraps around my waist
leaves only me protected and only me disgraced.*

by Hannah Butcher

