



Santa Tarantula

Jordan Pérez

Notre Dame Press (Feb 1, 2024)

Softcover \$18.00 (80pp)

978-0-268-20752-6

Do perps read poetry? Is poetry's *perpose* to take aim at the malevolence in all of us? Jordan Pérez would like a word with you. An expert in online safety and childhood sexual abuse prevention, she has been published in *Poetry International*, *Mississippi Review*, *Cutthroat*, and elsewhere.

The Glory Has Departed

*My mother sucks sardines from the tin, absorbs
them into her own soft body. You can almost
disappear sideways, she says, standing before
the hotel mirror in knee socks, broaches clinging
to her slip like cicadas. We take a train to Cinque Terre,
scatter fists of loam from the windows, insist
that the earth absolve our skin. My mother rubs
flaxseed oil into my palms: this oil of purity
she prays will cleanse me in the Italian sun.
But the glory has departed from my body
and cannot be gathered back.
We buy fists of grapes at an open
air market, partake of the blood.
I watch her after through the shower glass,
smell the thick oleanders wilt,
sense her wild mourning, see
that she has shaved off all her hair.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (March / April 2024)

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