

Art Therapy

Michelle Wing

They send me a slip of paper
with his name above these words:
“Anger Management – Certificate of Completion.”

As if.

As if twelve weeks of one-hour sessions,
twelve weeks of talking about his feelings,
twelve weeks of tips on counting to ten
could make him into a new man,
could undo the damage.

I know too well he can con anyone:
Police. Lawyers. Landlords.
Me.

And this piece of paper is the last slap I want to feel.

I go to my closet, and get my dancing dress,
the little black one that twirls when I move,
that reminds me of freedom and the time before.

Do you want to know what he was like?
I’ll need some tools.

Scissors to slash the hemline.
Blades to rip open sleeves.

A lighter to torch the fluttering strips.
Dirty boots to grind out the flames.

Then a razor, to nick my forearm,
so I can smear blood across his name,
and pin that worthless paper to my ruined dress.

I bandage my arm, find a hanger, and
display the dress like a piece of art.

It is my body on the wall, bruised and battered,
and nobody, nobody, can say they don’t see.