

CHRISTIAN TERESI

BUST OF AN AFRICAN WOMAN

Woman of copper and tin, we too dress in costume.
We smile, nap, let birdsong go noticed
or unnoticed. We sometimes forget confidence

is an imaginary state, and degrees are not impressive,
and books are not impressive. Sometimes we cling
tightly to loose threads of legitimacy. We forget

the board of directors does not live in the real world.
We watch storms ride electric whips. We watch
them on radar through televisions and still have no

authority to them. Woman whose mouth looks real
enough for speech, but has no use for venom,
or sophistry, or the time to confuse mythology

and truth. We don't spend enough time trying,
not to get filled with shams—not to get melted down
for weapons, or molded into a new bust for the victor.

Passion and suffering still mean the same thing in Latin.
And after the tempest? We prettify the sadness of a city
rebuilding as if this isn't another form of neglect.