

MARY MOORE

## Van Gogh's Howl, on Cypresses

The brushwork sinews the trees' dark  
greens, even in this museum  
postcard: the strokes crawl,  
horn in and out, finger each other;  
each one is almost a figure.  
Even the sky is alive:  
the yellow crescent moon, half  
a mouth, howls,  
the paint, a burl of blue O's.

I howled once, fled  
the house at 2:00 A.M.,  
not where cypresses  
line the great vineyards' drives,  
but under November sycamores  
near the SP tracks: I ran,  
stumbled, almost fell, and  
ran again, ripped my shirt, bared  
the love wound, and howled, lips  
stretched so wide the wordless  
vowels hurt. And nobody heard,  
saw, or dared to.

In the painting, nobody's face,  
or mine or yours, surfaces  
in the fore-tree, eyes and mouth round,  
lit beige: has a god arbored  
another woman—tongueless  
but not senseless—to feel,  
bleed, die in that body  
only partly wood?

Here and there, a touch  
of emerald and beeswax gold  
lights on the foliage;  
and in the delta of sky  
between the two trees,  
arced strokes, over-rippling  
coils or concentric petals:  
not serpentine, but floral,  
a blue rose. Heaven  
is burls, howls, roses.  
The cypresses writhe.

Mary Moore has won five awards and had three books published in the last two years: *Amanda and the Man Soul* (Emrys, 2017); *Flicker* (Broadkill River Press, 2016), which won the Dogfish Head Poetry Prize; and *Eating the Light* (Sable Books, 2016). Her work has recently been published in the *Gettysburg Review*, the *Georgia Review*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, and more. She's a native Californian who found teaching in West Virginia, where she lives with a philosopher and a cat.

NOAH BUCHANAN

*Apollo Crowned Glorious While  
Instructing a Child in the Art of Music, 2017*  
Oil on Linen, 48 x 38 in

