

The Storyteller

“You have to know what scares you.”

He tried other things before he found
his stories again. They had waited, ready
to embrace him like a well-deserved snake,
winding slowly, softly up and through,
inviting resistance or charmed acceptance,
ready to strike. But what sweet poison,
working in or out, who cares
when the tale spreads over mind and bone?
Lord, it hurts to stand there naked
with a story wrapped around you
but there’s freedom in it.
You can always deny it, watch it slither off,
be lonely for it, imagine it in the night,
and wake to find it, smooth and demanding
around you, ready to strike.

—Lisa Bolin Hawkins