

Sweet Jesus

by [Christine Hemp](#) in the [February 12, 2020](#) issue

(Peter, on the mountain)

Not the light but how it spoke, his transfigured  
flesh an instrument of consonance and discord.  
As if that were not enough, Elijah? Moses, too?

James grabbed his knife. John stood mute, dis-  
figured by fear. And I? Well, some people act. Some  
wait, and then there are those who think out loud.

Let's build three sheds! I shouted, instantly  
regretting it. What I meant was *hold still*, but my words  
never come out right. When light stopped throbbing,

tympani broke the sky. It shook us hard. That voice.  
Nothing I want to hear again, believe me. Later,  
stumbling downhill, following his easy stride,

we knew our former selves were done. *Sweet Jesus*  
my body bucked with the secret we were sworn  
to keep. When I couldn't sleep under insufficient  
stars, I rose and tore my tunic off, ripped it in two.