A Call to the Elders
By Julia McKeown

Butch baby,
Dyke starlight
Transexual Transylvania

Denizens of the in-between
Breadcrumbs of oil and glitter
Turned blood and breaks of bone

Is there a spell for this?

For pulling the light from the cracks
Calling the vanished back
Wrapping the still-here around me

Like a cloak that whispers home
That whispers safe from the storm

I am afraid and tired

No one at this sleepover looks like me
Understands my names
Can you pick me up please?

Please, I skinned my knee on sharp words
Do you have some bactine?

I got lost in the woods looking for, something
And returned covered in burrs (in best intensions)
Do you have some calamine?

I need help fighting on this side of the horizon line

Lately, it feels like gender’s the one fucking me

Please, still be breathing, somewhere
Please, tell me we make it past forty

Give me your hands, your faces
Let me play with your wrinkles

I am hungry for them
For time, for touch

For smiles stretching past the sympathetic
For ones whose hope still shows
The tug of sadness around the mouth

That comes from unexpected survival
From the luck of the draw

Please, I am cold
I am heavy on the horizon

I am struggling to find a home
On this side of the River Stix

Where someone looks like me
Knows my names