

Healers

I encountered a scaffold
outside the Holy Trinity Church in Vladimir, Russia.
At first I didn't notice her
slumped against the side of the church—
she was pretty small for a scaffold, pretty un-
assuming. Her safety mesh
was torn in places and sun-bleached all over
and threatened to dislodge
due to a forceful wind that was typical
of the season. She was shaking.
She was fundamentally insecure.
She told me that good foundations are essential
and that the men who had put her together
hadn't taken advantage of the right opportunities.
Now, each day, someone came by
called her 'unsafe' and also 'a liability'
then left, failing to initiate the dismantling process
that yes would have been painful
and slow, but kinder.
International visitors to the church
blamed her for the mess of tools and rags
on the grounds and for the fact
that they could no longer see
the church's celebrated mural
depicting Saint Artemy of Verkola
unusually pious
highly venerated
child saint killed by lightning.
His dead body radiated light
never showed signs of decay
and was in fact said to have effected
multiple miracles of healing.
I said comforting things to the scaffold
but she only seemed to lean more heavily
against the side of the church.
We are rarely independent structures she said
before she dropped a bolt pin
which released a long section of tube
which released another bolt pin
which released several wooden boards
which scraped another tube
and made an unbearable sound.

Arundin Misa