

STORE RADIO

by Sugar le Fae

Patti Smith is a goddamn genius.
I love Van Morrison,
but if Patti Smith covers
your song, man, she owns it.
Suddenly, above the din,
her dry siren-call: Jesus died
for somebody's sins but not mine.
I scan the store for stiffs,
but no one's paying attention.
As a kid, her words unnerved me.
At 33, when 'Gloria'
comes on the store radio,
I freak the fuck out, singing
to customers, moshing in place.
No one else can hear it.
Patti Smith's punk-as-fuck
commentary on the male gaze.
Van Morrison appropriates
a preacher's posture,
testifying to his own glory.
Smith appropriates Morrison.
Or someone like him.
Writing a novel between
his lines, reclaiming the outlaw
fantasies reserved for men,
queering the narrative—
Patti Smith transcends gender,
frontman of her own band.



—for Sienna