

Timothy Liu

VOX HUMANA

Wrapped in scarves of flame, a woman
sealed in a pinewood box offering
prayers to a God she was not afraid
to meet. Are we nothing more
than names still searching for voices
to inhabit?—Giuditta Pasta,
Maria Malibran, and all those divas
who survive as print, fioriture
of portraiture long before our age
reduced their gowns to relics enshrined
behind smoked glass—La Fenice’s pyre
devouring sheaves of Callas’ letters
as we gondola downstream—ashes
blown back into our faces.