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KARYNA MCGLYNN

The New Mothers

Now my young daughters are made-up and strutting from the dark conspiracy of the closet, buggy in hand, boundaries of that small kingdom defined by what they are not: they will not be like me.

They have solemnly sworn it, a spit n' shake over the dusty Hoover. There is an articulated resolve in their swagger: how to stay sexy despite the children.

The answer is my antithesis: shadow of lost potential moving modishly thin and dark behind me.

Specters of wishful women appear through the shifting plastic of garment bags, skins begging to be filled, they are going as fast as they can, stuffing cotton balls into the loose cups of a bra and holding their breath...

now they are Birmingham women who smoke mentholated cigarettes when they pee.

One scissors commando across the golf-course: short orange skirt, lucky lotto ball nipples rolling. Where is her house? There!

Watermelon stucco lost in the duckweed. Nights spent ordering unnecessary things out of catalogues, her nails cracking long over a diet soda.

Across town a sister's body snuffles and contorts; she is a yogurt pretzel in a world without breakfast.

I see: two stewardesses who take sex seriously, who hate one another and send Chablis on birthdays, who wear sporty-fresh deodorant and black stockings,

two women who keep their children's faces clean and turned away from cameras, whose bodies, upon careful inspection hold the physical memory of a girlhood spent mapping

their future from the mouth of this closet, hours learning to turn like hell on the dime of my old stilettos, blue shadow

crumbling down, before there is any lover to scorn but me, soured lips pulled away from the gum when I say that I love them:

four faithful compass eyes that always roll north now before walking abruptly through the door.

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