

Girlhood

### **The West Wood**

It's autumn now, and that means  
mum petals are swirling  
collecting and pooling in small lagoons  
around the mailbox

my mother kneels before them  
scooping handfuls into tight piles  
her breasts are heaving  
her belly's swollen with my brother

she can't find the strength to rise  
she's so fat with writing child  
so she stays sitting on the asphalt  
i stare from the kitchen

there's something wrong, she hangs too low  
i can hear it in the hum of the refrigerator  
the buzz of flies against the window screen  
i find ways to justify my unease

it's autumn now, and trees are restless  
disgorging mounds of red upon the streets  
i've heard that this is beautiful  
but i know dying when i see it

### **Little/Big**

stretch marks crease ridges across  
my breasts and thighs  
so i know i am a woman

it is so apparent in my sleeplessness  
i stand with myself in the shower  
watching my hair curl down the drain

the obviousness of my change  
fogs up all the windows  
gasps against the door

i drink TV static i taste throbbing skin  
i spend nights divining shadows on my ceiling

try to discern where i am

there's nothing for me in reversion  
but here it's dark and blurred  
and so I press forward

### **Disfigured**

i am all made up of fish skin  
i am slimy and hard and cold  
and you can't come close

i am all choked up on shark fins  
my guts all gather in my throat  
laced with putrid sea bane

i am all layers and folds  
my own flesh is a locked door  
flimsy pink and constricting

i am meat that's left to broil  
in it's own molded scent  
i am what the sun has left

### **For Evergreen**

summer has caught us  
between the boughs and over beds  
of dead pine needles  
orange and green orange and green  
we sit and wait for the flame to burst  
and set ablaze our contraband  
orange and green orange and green

exaggerated gasps, a choke and a pass  
and we all think we're feeling it  
we all feel a little golden  
but in pictures later I am green  
this whole day is new and young  
we watch the sun fall through the trees  
orange and green orange and green

## **Sweet Sixteen**

i taste death on my tongue  
i feel the stagnancy of an old pond  
it's all warm water and saliva  
pressing bruises to my neck  
and all my skeletons come after dark

he's got pale skin like river water  
so fast, so tight, so cool  
and these loaned rooms, i know,  
are temporary and not our home  
but we flock to them just the same

i can't sleep, i never have  
and this whole damp room's a swamp  
sticky slick and grating  
but my hands don't move, can't move  
corpselike, the humidity rises

i'll remember this swelter season  
as a bed, a hunting ground  
a clover mattress where he and I laid  
he sleeps on his side, ghosts  
weaving in and out, in and out

*Written by Cecelia Viera  
Phillips Academy Andover  
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