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Asteroid

Lauren Burgess
University of New Orleans

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Asteroid

Lauren Burgess

Ryan Chighizola Prize Winner

Asteroid why don't you come down from there?
I grow bored easily. "I confess I have no inner resources,"
other than the dictionary shoved in my purse, but you like that.
It is so human.

Asteroid you know that the nature of my life, a word,
goes soberly toward night like a skunk with an itch.
Your gravity is greater than a conversation about Lowell. The seas feel your weight.
I need your grazing occultation, how you reach the sudden limit of scopes
and disappear. Asteroid, are you here?
Do you like the look of Boston?

Asteroid you are a pompous potato,
throwing yourself across the sky with glee in circuits
while I'm looking for something to crawl inside of and die.
Maybe I need something to love me back.
Asteroid does this feel like love?
Can you see my pores the way I see your craters through a Barlowe?
I haven't washed in days, Vesta, maybe you need glasses.
Clean me up with your metals and show me God.
Asteroid show me God in my father's face,
show me God the way little boys are shown breasts.
I know you love me; shit on the Garden. Shit on polygenesis theories,
on the islands of trash in the Pacific, on the internalized ideology that carved me "woman."
We hate them. We made them.
Asteroid, you are woman. You are woman in poodle skirt learning double-dutch.
You are woman creating dutch oven. You are woman with your head in an oven.
With our heads in the oven, we are woman.

O lovechild! O big cunt on the town! These and I unapologetically:
Asteroid help us change a tire.
Asteroid send a meteorite to relieve Trump's scalp.
Asteroid come walk the park with me.
Asteroid Marx was right, I'm not sorry.
Asteroid do you have any spare change? The firefighters wanted me to ask.
Water is scarce, family planning is all the rage, and as for smiling: there is no money in it.
Gas prices set the Middle East on fire, and as I said,
water is scarce. Masks are mandatory for Chinese children on the playground,
masks are mandatory for conversations with family over green beans and ham.
I haven't talked to my mother since she died.
Inevitability is the beauty of this.
Anticipation is the root and the spring of this, that feeling of upcoming roadkill--
then it's gone: mom in the supermarket.
What is your core of?

And if you're still searching, Asteroid there is a God,
and he stands next to a port-o-potty with double-cupped palms.