



poems by

**Laurie Filipelli**



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Executive Editor: Diane Goettel

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To Confess

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No, the process of transformation consists almost entirely of decay.

—Rebecca Solnit

# Girl

There's the me I am and the me I invent whenever you ask for a story—preferably one with unsolved mischief or golden decisions. Apocryphal me has shenanigans, goofy siblings, backyard sing-alongs, parents placidly saving days. As history goes, we've won. You keep a rock collection like I never did right here near your window. We stare for hours. True, once I flew out onto the roof but never told anyone—just you.

# The Road to Mora

Lead-colored drops, glittering sheets. A girl lives in a house of rain. Each day she pours herself from bed, looks at her face, grown heavier. By night circles a swollen floor, slick knobs never turn.



Outside: dry ground and passers lift umbrellas to the sun. She could take this as a hopeful sign instead of an uneven stitch. She gazes through the falling drops, listens to them tick.



To the sky she speaks, I've been so unhappy.  
Water lifts her. On its woven current, walls  
collapse. The sky replies: Tell another story  
about bad decisions. Hair streaming, she sings  
of slippery places. I am raining she thinks.  
Thunder closes the bridge.



There's nothing but a coat she doesn't wear.  
Either too hot or a talisman. Either her weight  
or her freedom. When snow falls, she feels it.  
And takes three deep breathes before hefting  
her coat to the sky; the sky refuses. Tosses it  
to the river; the coat returns. Two choices,  
really one in the same: white mules gleaming  
far ahead, or a coat right here like rain.



From a dark well she reaches. Another story:  
two monks have arrived at a house of adobe  
in sundrenched shirts, with wine.





Another girl cries outside the café

I'm perched

on a landing

*seventeen eighteen*

hairnet askew

a cowbird

carelessly pecking at fries

*twenty-one*

*twenty-*

*two*

my father counts

a flutter of wings

behind her eyes

what I can't

see

my daughter hides

*Nineteen*

*twenty*

a man made taller

before he dies

by cowboy boots

a bird in hat  
worth two small eggs

catches

in another's nest

small woman

saying please don't

help

my arms

unfreeze

the light

## Me, and the Me You Draw

I am only some soup at the side of the road  
chilled and thumb-swollen      myself a daughter  
below the bridge writing *For a good time call God*

But I have no number        near home just goats  
without much pattern:        in rain resting  
on the neighbor's porch        in sun  
the yard to the side of the house  
in cold        right here near the hedges  
but today I see them any old place        and not at all



I visit my father     on another floor  
every day a new face mask     a cascade  
of crumbs from passing nurses  
Whitman dear Whitman tell me it's luck:  
a foldout table with rolled out coins  
the thermometer's beep     through a quilt-block of darkness

(to the cemetery hill    my toe-stops    cling  
my monkey arms  
make motion    lines

unstuffed    from gloves  
my hands  
let go)