

LAW OF THE BODY

Lizzie Harris

She who never wanted children who took pills not to have them who took pills when she feared she would she who waited for the right job the right partner the right moment to even open to the idea of them she who carried them she whose organs went two-dimensional to make space who grew a new organ whose own body bowed to the needs of the idea of something she who vomited every day for eleven weeks who travelled with sour candies in a bag until her tongue bled she who bled calmly on the phone with the doctor she who slept on the floor of an empty office she who lowered her doses of all the medicines that made her want to live in the first place she who fed the body that fed the body on nothing but raw corn and vitamins she who grew forty pounds and carried it to and from the bus to the subway to the walk to work and back again she who took a course on labor and labored for days she who heard the nurse say perhaps she has a low tolerance for pain and thought back to when a mirror shattered her body and her father unsure of how to stop the bleeding put her in two pairs of sweatpants until they soaked through she who knows punishment is always a negotiation of tolerance she who lost consciousness when the epidural did its job too well who stomached three shots of ephedrine to breathe again so the child inside could breathe again she who they raced into surgery whose abdomen was sawed through and stitched up she who held the baby covered in her own insides who itched for days from withdrawal who loved the baby instantly who fed the baby until she passed out who gave up sleep and time and mind and heart she who gave so generously of her body over and over only to have them say it was never hers to give