That's Not Me

Carrie Rudzinski

She learned kissing boys standing up wasn't the best way to get them to like you,
spent six years exploring men through collarbones slept so close,
heartbeats were distinguishable.
And she told me, that's not me, that's never going to be me.
She was speaking dragonfly wing-pulling, throat spider crawl with sneezy dandelion eyes.
She spit in glass bottles before she chucked them through parking lots on Eighth Street,
loved the noise of gravel beneath her feet,
hugged fences when she was gettin' lonely
and still promised she would never ever, be me.
She sunk battleships like hide n' seek in underwear, a fleet of sailboat hearts flinging through the air, and she was spitfire wearing nothing but socks.
She used to tell me his claps sounded like she was saying,
"Stop, daddy, stop now,"
and she was light, smash, flick, like cigarettes and blonde hair.
Our conversations wispy, and seeping into other people's stories on subway trains.
He snapped like thumbs against wooden floorboards, and my questions still hang like ugly lamps in houses that have taken vows of silence.
She said, "That's not me, that's never going to be me. I never want to be you."
My mother taught me to pack dirt like pounding fists could teach me to throw punches.
He stood me tall and held his hands up like punching bags.
"Don't hold your fists like that, you'll break it. Hit harder, don't laugh, hit harder!"
She used to pick fights with me like bulldogs blinded red, with hate in her teeth, thick brick, and I used to fall.
Knees first, go limp, and hide in closets.
I never wanted to be me, either.
She pulled eyelids off the back of boys' plans, sunk button-lock store, not skip, kicked every hope in the knees, slapped tables like spoons.
Flowers grew like weeds when railroads came into town.
And sorry, we're never going back there because you fucked up.
You fucked up by being you.
She ran like yellow cars, traveling at midnight.
Fog moonbeams for breakfast and I don't know why she kept telling me the future was where we'd be different reflections of what we always wanted to be.
Wedding magazines and caterpillar feet,
I never wanted her to be like me, either.
I was ice frost and bucket smiles,
and she carried knuckle crack, smack, like
"Stop, Daddy,"
Clap, clap,
"Stop."

Her face said "Prosecute," and her faded laugh lines,
the laughs that were caused by gulps and gasps from finger punches to her gut,
like, stop signs against metal cars and wheels.
I'd say she's been dying since the age of 7, but if she really were to die, time might stop and heaven may flood.
And I don't really wish for people to go home at night.
I like when the streets are flooded with children, crying mosquito bites,
and parents babysitting rocking chairs,
and we become grandparents through our eyelash wishes gone amuck.
Paper airplanes take me home, and she never really had a home.
She had dandelion eyes and fistfights, and yeah.
She had knuckle crack, smack, like
"Stop, Daddy,"
Clap clap,
"Stop."

Lyrics Submitted by Gabbi

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