

At the Locker

For Atom & Eva

Michaela Mullin

What origin story do you have in there?

The mythology of small things.

Oh, I'd love an apple.

Have you ever thought about how
when you put your pencil to paper, even if
you let the pencil fall,
you've already made a mark?

Yes, but is it a dot or a line?

Depends on how sharp the tip
and how lightly
you let go.

(I tie a knot of my cherry stem
and pass it to you,
teeth to tongue.)

(The trace words here—

come un----.)

Total Eclipse

Michaela Mullin

Because it cost so much.
Because it caused too much.
Because the sun hit Cadillac
before I felt it, before I forgot
the sun sets so far away,
out West where I want to be.

Right on the horizon line.
Into that horizon line.
Right on.

Falling bulb,
filament for memory,
regenerates itself,

creates you, creates us
as television recreates,
as veterans and flagpoles hold up
ambiguity—
amber America.

Women
burning fire bright.
Where's my water,
my hydrant?

Women burning,

fired, bright.

Up the bill of right.
Stop redacting,
drawing hubris,
peddling goods.

Unratified
amendments.

45th man,
im-potis,
emend,
and *No*

Amen in this corner
where we stand
deciding which way
is go.

This zenith is our nadir.

Bears aren't marching.
Bears aren't market.

She-bears constellate.
She-bears ideate.

The Trojan Polar
gazing in the water
does not know
he isn't real.

Take me to the river
where I'll catch the day

it all costs more
than we have

and we'll cook it in the fire
and we'll eat it
and be full.

Goodnight, Sun.
Goodnight, Moon.

Invitation to a Relation

Michaela Mullin

The song my grandmother sang was in a language I felt but could not translate, barricaded as it was inside my child's mouth.

When I kissed her cheek in the coffin, the lips that held in both my first and second tongues became chapped at the future drought of her inflection.

Rolling my *rs* came easy, but always sounded like a loud engine looking for a more proficient and gentle coyote to cross our body borders.