

she

she follows me to work  
ties an apron around her waist  
goes out onto the floor and  
gets an order wrong.  
a manager appears, apologizes  
for the inconvenience.  
“she’s new,” he says,  
and yeah, sure, she.  
she’s new.

when she follows me home,  
she’s hanging in the closet  
next to my prom dress;  
she wears her hair in ribbons  
in the photos on the walls;  
she’s surrounded by hand-drawn hearts  
in a birthday card  
on my desk that screams  
DAUGHTER  
in big pink letters.

she is tucked beneath the tongues  
of my bosseseachersdoctors,  
riding on my coattails, stepping on my heels.  
she is glass in my palms,  
slivers in the skin like shards of ice,  
and i’m picking them out with bare fingers all  
raw with blood and cuts and  
no, thank you, i don’t need a band-aid,  
this happens all the time.

i look wrong i feel wrong i am wrong i must be,  
if i did it right they’d get it right but they don’t so i’m not.  
she’s stretching my vocal cords too tight,  
she’s keeping my shirts from laying flat.  
she’s tangled in the hair i buzz short every  
four to six weeks so she’ll maybepossiblyfinally leave me alone.  
(she won’t.)

she lives in my waist and my chest and my mouth  
wearing me like a dress that doesn't fit  
has never fit  
will never fit.  
she's written on my face in freckles;  
a constellation of  
sheherhers  
missmadamma'am  
pretty girl  
little lady  
she  
she  
she.