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immaculate conception

Molly Boyce

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Molly Boyce

we noticed her protruding belly in the fall
of that year, when the apples fell and the
pumpkins smiled and the air was thick
with cinnamon and tarragon

we joked about the turkey fattening up
for the kill and rhymed some silly song
about a pig becoming a ham, but we didn't
know what we were saying

she walked around with thin lips and
sad eyes, Mary going to confessional, immoral
or all knowing, we often confused saints
and sinners back then

the Sisters tucked her under their wings
protecting with their habits the fledgling
who had flown too soon, fallen to the ground
and waited for grace to save

by Christmas, her plaid stripes stretched gaunt,
imprisoning her and impaling her with
arrows of condemnation and curiosity
in a land of innocent children

she was gone by New Year's Day, we whispered
but did not ask, afraid that we also would be
visited in our sleep, fall at the voice of God,
and end up just like her.

mellifluous

Nicole Lynn

constricted deceit
melts the borders of our fingertips
ice you
metal me
in the soft chill of your outside,
I allow myself to be alloyed
you let me slip my smooth self
across the brim of your body
distilling your relent
with the curves
of my surfaces
the easy rendezvous of us
sharp and painful
glowing with pride
I stray between your limits
you seep in
I freeze over
paralyze
poison