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Lullaby

Casey Smith

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I used to think that the sound of women speaking
 Was god's string section?
 Maybe because old men have been
 Wedging us between book pages and
 Writing us like we have lilting voices
 For, like, centuries,
 Probably—
 They slick us with rosin
 And they bury us in the crooks of their necks
 And we learn to twist statements
 Into questions?
 There is a kind of music to that,

But when I listen to my friends and I talk
 In the green light of midnight diners,
 It sounds more like a percussion pit,
 And it smells like skin, and
 All the drummers are skipping around
 To different rhythms—
 No melody.

The umms are the bass drums
 Rumbling through lulls, the dull spaces
 Filling in the empty bits,
 Like, *Umm, I thought you were*
 Done sleeping with Jeremy?

The *likes* are the bright triangles,
 Shining up the air until
 Each chime catches light and glints back,
 Like, *My car got totaled and I was like, life is short.*
 I guess we're a thing but not, like, a thing-thing,
 Like—Christ, I still have to pay off my Corolla.

And the *tssks* are the symbol hits,
 Or maybe the snares, depending on the mouth.
 They slice through the
 Babble, the chatter, the jabber, the prattle—tssk.
 Like, *Tssk, you were looking for an excuse.*

No melody.
 It's one day of many,

Mundane if you want it to be,
But still, the world bends around
The tip of my tongue against the ridge of my mouth,
And yours,
And yours,
And yours.

The song ends;
I walk home alone in silence
But I can still feel the night's tempo rattling up my thighs
As my heels hit the pavement,
Our vibrations cradled in my ribs
And teeth
And elbows.

I don't want my voice
To sing anyone to sleep.