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Prayer Linda Smukler

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Linda Smukler

PRAYER

(I started to write & the letter upset me & I called and cried & you washed the sheets & had me pray.)

So you said and yes I like lipstick not on me on you you cried on the phone overwhelmed by my love and yours by all the too many words by your days which go by now too fast with too much work and not enough time by your cold by and for desire you cried in your home sitting in your blue plaid chair next to the low table low chair and the couch we made love on which now holds your lover passed out on dark wine you cried and asked if I was sleeping upstairs tonight you cried because I said no because I said I washed the sheets and tried to tell you why: I woke this morning upstairs in the guest room where you slept with me which is my room really as it holds my books my rain man kachina my volcano my fertility my rocks I slept there the night before (Monday) and the night before that (Sunday) which was the day you drove off into the dark I slept there because I did not want to lose you but I woke hot and dry from the woodstove I woke wanting to forget you were far away again to forget that when I went to sleep I held you in my mind and felt you hold me but also felt the shadow of your lover next to you I woke thinking it was time to sleep in a cooler place time to sleep in the bed downstairs where I had slept for five years with my lover to sleep on the side of the bed I chose near the window for quick escape and to look out at the weather (the only windows upstairs I needed and had were your mouth and the fragrant dawn of your hair) I woke and intended to sleep downstairs my back turned to the wide expanse of the bed to wake up and to look out at my pine tree and the empty bird feeder and everything that was safe and everything that kept me separate and alone

The night you called and cried I did sleep downstairs but before I slept I also prayed and I prayed again when I got up and like you I rose in the dawn freed and in love and in the new morning you said (on the phone again) Look but don't touch and for the first time claimed me for your own