

BMI

I have spent forever hating the impermanent:
the way a dress looks around the middle,
how much of my chin shows when I bow my head,
the number on the scale.

I would have been a Libra but I am a true Leo,
so I came into the world months early at 1.5 lbs.
Mommy risked her life to give me mine
and brags to God what it means to be *Jordan*—
born with the strength of rivers for which she was named.
premature baby but everything about me as an adult still carries as painful and urgent.

People tend to think I've always looked this way
or that I want to,
assuming that I didn't play Varsity sports in high school,
I don't spend nights dancing in front of studio mirrors until I can't stand anymore, I
don't skip so many meals that Cooper has to walk me to food to be *certain* I'll eat.

I have never been as heavy as the world thinks I should be.
I know what it is to be both too little and too much of a human.

I spend nights staring at the ceiling wondering
if the person who just left would love me if I didn't have boobs
and wondering if the one who hurt me did it because I do have them if

I were smaller would men be nicer in their words and in their touch?

When I see myself in the mirror I tell her I love her more the smaller her waist is.
She tells me she loves me always.
She is a liar.

If a genie gave me one wish
it would be to be so small

that my father could carry me in his palm again.
Boys

were a distraction

that ripped me apart

like the edges on a spiral notebook page

crumbled me up

tried to see who could toss me into the recycling bin

yelling “Kobe!” before the bell rang

missed the shot

left me on the ground

but girls

always picked me up

smoothed me back out

danced sparkly pens across my margins

tucked me away safely in a binder

and I liked them more anyway.

Barbary (Yawp!)

I am a warrior:

the silk of my pen floods over pages and pages

without an ark to ever stop the tide

of my thoughts

I write the feelings

that demand to be felt

(pain and love I dare not speak)

writing is

a Messiah

to Promised Lands

flowing with milk

and hyperbole
it is my rapier

brandished high
with bejeweled pride

because language is

the most powerful weapon
in the soul's artillery

my words go to battle
when my heart can't.