

CHECK BOX MARKED FEMALE

Women loving themselves
is such a great sin to some men,
such a vain, villainous act, and
I must say *some* men, so as
not to offend *all* men, like they've
never said anything similar.

As if women don't have to go through life
prioritizing the fragility of masculinity,
stroking egos until our hands ache,
Giving away every private part of ourselves
even when there is nothing left to take.

Sometimes I forget that my body
is supposed to be packaged and sold,
my insecurities perfectly grown
so I can buy them back from the men
that manufactured them.

If I am to fit in the box marked female,
if I am to squeeze myself between rigid walls,
I have to learn to be small, I must shrink my myself,
my stomach pouch, and shut my mouth.

I am to be seen, not heard,
like a porcelain doll with wax skin.

I will melt in the heat of my rage
because I'll never be the right woman,
and still there are so many wounds untouched,
the body is only the surface.

Beneath the skin there is still violence.

Femininity can be the wound and the weapon,
my body: a temple and a place where cruelty happens.

The trick is finding the balance:

dancing on heads of pins and praying for practice.

Maybe I can tear down walls and make a home of my own.

Can I reclaim something stolen from me so long ago?