

TRANSFORMATIVE LOVE
(50 lines)
CW: reference to eating disorder

I first transformed into a thick cotton blanket
—it was a cold night,
I was desperate—
They said not to share the bed. I held her
tight-wrapped in softness
as we slept in the crib.

When the formula ran out
I became a warm, full bottle until,
milk-stained mouth smiling,
she let go—
I rolled over worn carpet, drained. But
bruises didn't matter,
I was all my sweetheart needed
—emergency teething ring, substitute rattle—
changing often, in her baby days.

Her first month of school, I was a green pencil
clutched crooked in chubby fingers.
My bruises formed scars; still, nibbling tooth-marks
she knew herself loved.

Then a bicycle, to keep watch as she travelled alone—
As she grew, I stayed as objects longer;
she needed a guardian,
more than a mother at home.

Finally, she asked, “How does it start?
Is it hormones? A birthday?
When can I become something else?”
I could only say: it came to me when most needed,
When there was no other recourse

I became what I could to protect her,
But when all she wanted was to become small—
a gnat, feeding on the scent of a lettuce,
or smaller, the space between atoms,
I could not turn into salvation.

My baby was no infant now to suckle at a bottle.
I'd be anything to tempt her, however little:

A hint of vanilla in fruit salad,
the freshest dash of lime, then,
late at night, resume my shape
covered in rotten food scraps. Stop in her room,
watch my fading girl sleep.

And it was only in desperation that,
from my seat by her bedside,
when her heartbeat slowed, I came to be here.
My body, collapsing into tendrils,
ghosts through that thin gown,
down, I wrap myself around
—no, not wrap. I become—
her pulsing heart.
I beat for her now. I beat.
I will always beat.

