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RUTH DANIELL

POEM FOR MY BODY

No one else rescued me. Not my father
or my brother or, years later, the gentle man
who became my husband. Not my mother
or my best friend or any of the women
who listened to me tell my story
and told me their own stories as we drank
cups of hot chocolate in cafés in Vancouver
while outside the rain poured and fallen leaves
gathered like audiences in the streets. No.
None of them were there that night
when that first boyfriend leaned over me,
against me, into me. I remember how I froze,
how I could not move and I thought I hated myself,
hated my body — because it paralyzed me that moment,
because it was not beautiful enough or it was too
beautiful. But I do not hate my body. No.
I will love it. Let me praise my eyes for crying,
my throat for crying out. My hand, its impulse,
the red slap it left across his face.
Let me praise my arms for gathering my clothes,
my legs for taking me out of that house,
my feet for remembering left for brake, right for gas.