

Rib

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MICHAEL BAZZETT

## The One-Time Monster

The monster did not care about clichés when he contacted me from under the bed. I am here, he said, using a voice in my mind, and I will in all likelihood destroy you, with teeth like ivory knives.

These teeth do not fit properly inside my mouth. They peek out like tusks from my dark lips. But I am not hungry right now, he said, and he lay there, quietly, waiting to see what I would do. So much hair, I said. It was thick between my fingers and my hands disappeared into his pelt. That feels good, he said. No one has ever

touched me that way. No one? I asked. No, they are too afraid of these teeth leaving puncture wounds in their gut and how I might shred long strips of muscle from their bones. Oh, I said. Plus, you are the first person I ever met, he said, because I am a one-time monster. What is that? I asked, even though I already knew. He just looked at me, his brown eyes patient like a dog. I thought about freezing with terror, but he was too smart for that. Thanks, he said after a while, but would you please just let me go?

HOPE WABUKE

## Rib

between his stomach  
and his heart

that place  
taken from

other animals  
and eaten

with barbecue  
and applesauce

licked clean  
and then thrown

to the dog

REBECCA FOUST

## Prayer for My New Daughter

*After Yeats, and inspired by an attack on transgender students using a "bathroom with urinals" at a college in the northeastern US.*

A soul in chrysalis, in first agonized molt,  
must choose between a LADIES or MENS room.  
For some—for you—these rooms are fraught,  
an open field where lines are drawn:  
the White-Only signs; Serrano's *Piss Christ*  
and Duchamp's *Fountain*, pitted with acid  
and icepicks and O god, de-faced. For this hour  
I have walked and prayed, walked and prayed.  
Daughter, I'm afraid. Those icepicks are made  
to fit a blind hand and are kept so well-honed.  
You tell me again that just changing the words  
won't change the world you still have to live in.  
You are soft as sown grass and fierce as cut glass.  
You pack your new purse with lipstick, and mace.