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Cute

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MICHELA MILLER

Cute

Your word echoes:

“Cute.”

Maybe you mean to say I'm the sweet-spirited wisp in the corner,
apparently too innocent to hear the joke you are telling.
I'm carefree, delicate,
nothing more than a petite songbird.

There are days when I'm tempted to put on black eyeliner and a leather jacket
and do something dangerous
just to prove you wrong.
To prove you overlook
the heaviness poured onto tear-stained pillowcases,
the pit in my stomach
when I walk down sterile halls to visit my sick mother,
or the occasional clenching fear of failure
that wells up in my chest.

If you are content with a mere glance,
you can stop at “cute.”
But I'm not content.
Who do I want to be?
A woman—warrior—
lioness—
queen.

The woman
who walks into a room
whose mere presence
sucks the hushed whispers out of the crowd—
She is here.

The woman
who leaves others' biting remarks in the dust of her own ambitions,

whose inner confidence deflects the cookie-cutter gaze
of strangers staring in.

The woman
whose quiet strength bends boulder weaknesses into stepping stones
who with callused hands and trembling muscles,
clings,
climbs,
rises.

The woman
who will never be too busy to enfold you in her warm embrace
whose smile can smooth out crackling creases in hearts.
She loves.
Even meeting her once
is enough to know she's that kind of soul.

Perhaps someday you'll recognize me—
a powerful force, a fledgling goddess.
So before you glance past me,
remember one thing:
I am so much more than cute.

*MICHEL*A is from Provo, Utah. She is a double major in English and Editing and Publishing with a Japanese minor. She enjoys jazz music, mountains, and crossword puzzles in addition to writing poetry and nonfiction essays.