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Grandmother Naming

Shannon Castleton

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Grandmother Naming



Shannon Castleton

In the passenger seat she rubs her belly
like a good idea, and reads billboards out loud.
She is looking to name the baby. Dick's Café.
St. George Inn. She thinks it's a boy
she's naming, having read the paper clip
dangling from a kite string over her wrist: left
to right, a boy. Circling,
a girl. She pats the warm fluttering, thinks
my little man, my sweet idea.

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At this point, I am no one's idea,
though it's my mother's fingers grown smooth
in the thin sac. When she's pulled out
onto the white-sheeted bed, she will already feel
they are sad for her
girl parts, will already be full of her allotted eggs.

Inspecting her, Grandfather will call her good
and name her after himself—also
after Jerry Lee's Used Car Lot.
Later she will imagine me, her first brilliant
daughter. She'll close her eyes to a dream
of my face, believe I love my name
and my body. Why shouldn't she? She doesn't
know who she's dreaming. For now I am bright
arms and glimmering feet, I am little
sun-dried white dresses.