2017

Her Black Braids Broke Down

Casey Grooten
Western Michigan University, casey.l.grooten@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate

Part of the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate/vol16/iss1/16

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Lee Honors College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Laureate by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
No one will remember me, she thought.

She hangs upside down, rain water collects in her open mouth, behind her teeth.

She researches family members who exhibited sociopathic tendencies. Lights a lantern outside the bedroom door at night to be certain no spirit steals her intentions, written on moleskins, under a pillow.

Dad kissed her on the head and asked "Why does your upper lip always itch?" Still asks herself this question, there are a million answers.

He said it’s because she couldn’t keep quiet, always opened doors with stolen keys. Theft is a common theme in her life, whether it be a pair of gold hoop earrings, heavy, lion-head shaped clasps, or any man with a dagger hanging between his legs.

She wrote a novel every time he breathed onto her neck in the nighttime.

She knew because of the stories Dad told her, before he crushed sage and fern together with his hands—that this man controlled her with his silence, devoured her with his rage, and would kill her with his body someday.

She should’ve stayed invisible to men, but broke that magic long ago—It wells up in the belly, radiates warmth through the heart and brain, you see it in her face.