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Miss Scarlett

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Cappello: Miss Scarlett

MISS SCARLETT

Katie Cappello

I do not cry in front of anyone.
Sucking on the speckled end
of another cigarette
I hold the lovely smoke in my lungs
for a moment, then exhale
through the lips, move on
to the next pair of pantyhose,

each seam straight
down the back of each calf.
This heat makes me do strange things:
bite into mango flesh so hard
fibers get stuck between my teeth—
the pain of sugar, enamel, separation,

the red surprise of swollen gums.
Do you want to kiss?
Hold a breast in each hand?
Slide your stomach
across the small of my back
where my dress dips down in promise?

I'd rather discuss
the way people breathe
when one has come and the other hasn't.
One chest rises up, down, up
down, a well-greased piston.

The other barely moves,
drags a deep, irregular
march through wet pastures. I am no
debutante, tobacco leaves

and white gloves. I am another type
of alien. Sweat on my upper lip,
a pearl moustache, an invitation
to lick. Do you desire? Well,
so do I.