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Albatross

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Keifer: Albatross

ALBATROSS

**MOLLY SUTTON
KIEFER**

**MILT KESSLER
MEMORIAL PRIZE FOR POETRY
FINALIST**

This was seventh grade. Brad drew stick figures fucking in his math notebook and lewdly complimented the topographical changes beneath our shirts.

Boys will be boys. When one of us thought to complain, she was leered at, threatened with suspension. Anita Hill was laughed away too.

We kept a notebook, a quiet commotion. It was our favorite science teacher who called us into the lab equipment closet, explained how Brad caught the notebook, was found dissecting its pages, a *Playboy* behind a textbook, a flashlight in his pants. *Yes, Mom. I've been studying for hours.*

In eighth grade, I actually liked my school picture, for the first time. I'm wearing an eggplant wool turtleneck.

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I see pretty—my father says, *our sister is cute. But you are beautiful*, as if these words always belonged to us. Brad ruins it when he tells me he's been masturbating to his open yearbook.

I will resist the urge to bind my daughter's chest. My mother claims our breasts are our best inherited feature from her, but I always thought these weights more a curse. But then I show her the mermaids of Neptune, and she does not protest the impossibility of this spray.

It is then that I know what she meant by *best feature*—the gift of a towel nest, late at night, rocking with my daughter in my arms.