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from 'WROUGHT'

Lily Duffy

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FROM 'WROUGHT'

Lily Duffy

At the gas station, a woman pulls up beside a pump, gets out of her car, unscrews the cap, bends down, and begins vomiting into her gas tank. Vomit slides down the wheel well and pools on the ground, the whole ordeal lasting several minutes. When she's finished, she wipes her mouth with the back of her wrist, gets back in her car and starts it. Sits there for several minutes, applying makeup in the mirror of her sun visor, before driving away.

At nine, I smelled like plasticky strawberries

At ten, poison and scalp

At fourteen, fruit punch on the neck, cherries and almonds on the legs

At sixteen, warm vanilla sugar

At nineteen, musky oranges left on a grill

At twenty, marshmallows and blunts

At twenty-two, other people

At twenty-four, maple syrup, or cologne, or a filing cabinet

At twenty-five, skin

A cruel game some guys came up with during a party I was at, wherein all the girls
“who

had nothing to hide” washed their makeup off and lined up for the men to evaluate
them

individually before convening to come up with a collective “order”—Most
Different

Looking (ugliest) to Least Different Looking (prettiest), which they would
communicate

to the female participants by physically moving them into that order before
announcing

which end of the line was which. Particularly cruel about the game were the

circumstances surrounding it—everyone was drunk (no driving home), the

temperature outside was below freezing (no walking home), it was late in a very
rural

part of the county (no calling a cab), and any girl who’d gotten a higher (uglier)
ranking

knew she couldn’t put her makeup back on without risking teasing that, given the

circumstances, she didn’t have the emotional faculties to withstand at that time.

Particularly sad about that night is that if all the girls had trusted each other
enough to

know that, even drunk, none of us actually wanted to partake, the game never
would have

taken place, and the short girl at the unfortunate end of the line (who was actually
sort of pretty and really didn't look all that different without makeup, and almost
certainly did not look the *most* different without it of all of us; rather, she was just
the
chubbiest) wouldn't have felt like she had to let out an awful, forced laugh when
we
could all feel the sharp air she was taking in through her nose, in order to protect
herself
from further humiliation, and the face of the girl next to her wouldn't have gone
disturbingly vacant, nor would the girl at the opposite end of the line yelling, in a
voice
much higher than her normal one, that it was "shot time" be the thing that allowed
the
rest of us to feel like we were physically capable of breaking from the shape we'd
been
fashioned into. After that night, I wore considerably less makeup, to parties
and in general, and pretended to be convinced that something positive had come
out of
the experience. The girl whose face looked like she'd abandoned it got a tattoo a
couple
weeks later—it said "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" in green cursive across
her
stomach. She has several kids now, and when I saw her at a friend's baby shower a
few
months back, I was ashamed of the strong desire I had to ask if I could see it again.

“They had a real cloud over the stage and it followed this little girl; she ran into the
fake
well face-first trying to escape it. Now she has a scar where that soft divot
between her
neck and collarbone is.”

Find the plastic for my

Face on the floor every morning, after

I've slipped on it

Woke on the breakfast window seat, phoneless and wet

Now to collect:

shoes	(deep end of pool)
wallet	(lodged in bra's left cup)
keys	(hooked to the belt of a sleeping stranger)
phone	(missing)

Checking the bathroom when I notice I've been scratching my palm all morning. I look down at it—in smeared black ink: **LAUNDRY**

In the basement, buzzing at the bottom of a hamper (mosses of the grown). Palm

red
for the rest of the day.

There were booths for the face—paints and clays, photos and plasters

Hats for the drinks and drinkers, a coat check for keys, credit cards for bonds

I bought a funnel cake iced with buttercream and ate it on a hay bale

Behind me, a handmade sign over a pile of vomit: FREE. Hot dog floating in the toilet

Here, every body parties—arrives to trash and become “trashed”

The purpose being to clear one of one’s self, to make room again

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Lily Duffy is a recent graduate of the creative writing MFA program at CU Boulder. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Bone Bouquet*, *interruption*, *smoking glue gun*, *Horse Less Review*, *Twelfth House*, *TENDE RLOIN*, and *Dusie*, among other places. She is originally from Maryland and lives just outside of Denver. With Rachel Levy, she edits *DREGINALD*.