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On the Rosendale Trestle // The Day I Pulled My Childhood like Sheets from My Bed

Emily Zogbi
SUNY New Paltz

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EMILY ZOGBI

On the Rosendale Trestle

My little brother and I grip the rusty edge
hauling ourselves up to spit into the creek.
White gobs of saliva in free fall twist and spin.
We watch. His sailing straight ahead into the air,
mine barely making it over the railing,
both eventually landing with a *plop* in the water.

We are children again. Our mother hovering,
camera fixed to her eye. *Smile nice,*
this is for the Christmas card.
He places his arm around me. We pose.
By the time the shutter clicks our spit
has become just another part of the current,
he has grown another five inches
and I have to shield my eyes from the sun
just to see his face.

The Day I Pulled My Childhood like Sheets from My Bed

I didn't tell my mother
about the pink flowers I plucked
from underneath my mattress
or the holes I found in every corner.

Instead, I snuck past the kitchen into her bedroom,
sought out the cookie tin tucked underneath her bed
with all her needles, her spools of thread,
the piles of un-mended shirts, the photographic lenses
and never-developed film.

My childhood sounds like my mother's voice
from up the stairs, tastes like the thread
between my lips before I push it
through the eye of another needle,
smells like developer fluid staining my hands yellow.

The day I pulled my childhood like sheets from my bed;
I tried to mend the holes myself.
The thread was the wrong color, the apertures too big,

I pricked my fingers and wiped the blood on my legs
before more pink flowers could grow.

I folded my childhood the way
my mother folds a fitted sheet,
shoved it in her sewing kit, tucked it back under the frame
where it's always been, behind the piles of shirts,
beside the dusty camera.