



On Earth As It Is

2010

Three Prayers

Melissa Broder

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Broder, Melissa, "Three Prayers" (2010). *On Earth As It Is*. 25.
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on earth as it is

prayer as story, story as prayer

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AUTHORS

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Three Prayers

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Pennsylvania Prayer

Bless me I was once myself and couldn't read
a thermostat. My mother's breasts were long

inside her bathrobe. Sometimes we were Polish.
I believe god knows these things about me

so I needn't say them with heart. I'm afraid
to say anything with heart. One summer

there came an ice storm and a skinny lady
flew inside my ear. She forced me to eat

apples, only apples, until I wasn't
myself anymore. Wine made me feel myself.

Wine made me somebody else. God knows
there is more to this story. My heart fell out.

Prayer of the Teenage Waifs

We want security and we want out!
The groceries have cobwebs. French toast sticks
and sickie chicken sausages turn lettuce
for breakfast. Put dinner in a locket,
then sniff to get to clavicle heaven
where Mommy gets pinched and shock treatments
are ice capades, Aspartame sensations

of Fatherland. Oh Fatherland! She's been
a bad babysitter. Deliver us

from Burger King with In Touch magazine.
Let the basement be our basement, the bones
and ringtones our only breath in mirrors;
let mammaries unbloom, let fumes be food
and we'll massacre into cylinders.

*Excerpted from When You Say One Thing but Mean Your Mother,
Ampersand Books Copyright February 2010.*

Early 90s Prayer

From now on let me be a better friend
to the living. How does this pertain
to Kiefer Sutherland? Mucho.

When Kiefer goes Flatline, the ghost
of bullied Billy Mahoney unghosts
revealing even poltergeist

were tiny hurt people once too. Grant me
rabbit ears for others. Roast me
and ungrandiose me. Let me not pray

for a Spirit Horse to take me down easy
in a rough draft like Lou Diamond Phillips
as Chavez Y Chavez. I need not be

the surest shot on Earth. Fling far
Young Guns dream. No more
Billy the Kid for me.

Melissa Broder is the author of WHEN YOU SAY ONE THING BUT MEAN YOUR MOTHER (Ampersand Books; 2010). She is the chief editor of La Petite Zine and curates the Polestar Poetry Series at CakeShop. Her poems appear in many journals, including: Opium, Shampoo, Swink, Five Dials and PANK. By day she works as a literary publicist. Find her online at www.melissabroder.com.

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