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Three Prayers

Melissa Broder

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pray as story, story as prayer

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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 flames 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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