

Speaking of Women

After Victoria Redel

Your daughters, their sisters, the Nana
who ran with something sewn
into the collar of her good wool coat.

The neighbor girl who on every trip
to Target must pocket a lipstick
with names like “Cave Gray” and

“Animal.” The young waitress
who drags a needle across
her ankle to see what exists

when wound becomes Wonderland—
The hunted girl. The lost
girl. The middle-aged woman,

face just beginning to crease,
who can’t look in the mirror
to see her father’s reflection. The

starved woman. Forgotten woman.
Skittish woman. Friend. The girl
who comes home alone every afternoon

to an empty fridge and no TV. Strapped
down girl, electric girl, the girl who
can’t stop dancing. The one so alone

she splays herself along the back seat
of a Chrysler for the entire hockey team
to visit. The one who never stood up.

The one who never cried out.
The girl with a rust-colored stain
to tell her who she is.