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Mary

Claire Mikeson

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Claire Mikeson

(Mary)

My sister came down the stairs
in his stained shirt, in her underwear
still drunk, oily haired, makeup smeared eyes
bigger than mine, bluer than mine
(but I've always been skinnier,
and she never learned how to talk to men).

30 She asked if I wanted to smash eggs,

M Grandma's eggs,
i the eggs from Grandma's chickens
k on the kitchen floor today.
e I asked her, "What's wrong with you?"
s and she went back upstairs.

o Later she came down the stairs
n still in his stained shirt, still in her underwear,
sober, and she only looked at me,
hangover-face, purple shadows
under bluer eyes, and walked by.
A few minutes later I heard the pop,
the progression of pops
of Grandma's eggs on the kitchen floor
the eggs from Grandma's chickens,
and I heard her start to cry,
sob, pop, sob,
and twelve shattered eggs oozed
over the red tile of my kitchen floor.

She stayed in the kitchen
to watch me clean up her mess,
the leaky orange spatter, the shattered shells
dried on the door of my refrigerator.
(Grandma's chickens eat grasshoppers,

and they don't live in cages.)
she just stood there, yolk-toed
and asked me whether there were
twelve invisible, dead baby chickens
floating in all that orange. I don't know.
She said she'd make a good housewife.
I told her, "You'd make a horrible housewife."
She thought about it and said,
"You're right, but I'd have pretty babies."