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Bitter Candytuft

Danielle Shuster

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DANIELLE SHUSTER

BITTER CANDYTUFT

Iberis amara

The desert lets out a briney sigh
as if it remembers
the ocean. Sometimes

I see you in the candytuft—
four-petaled,
white as hospital sheets.

A compulsion towards trauma
leads me to hem & re-hem
the Camel-Wide-texture

of your laugh, to settle
on a tuberose
for your lapel, to hold our absence

in my belly when I am restless.
Recollections handled
until they're threadbare reveal far too little

& too much. Loneliness is submissive,
but thistled. I wake in the night,
the never-coming-back of you
clustering in my throat.