woke up in 2010//an exercise four years ago

by Glynnis Eldridge

I am from slow diagnoses, impatience and parents skeptical of New York City doctors. I am from tall buildings, yogurt shakes, and envy for my brother's asthma machine. I am from here, stay away from there, don't get too close, be careful at the edge, the 21st floor, building 200. I am from the kitchen, where mom hid her washing machine, where I kept my overcrowded terrarium of snails I had collected from the garden. I am from the shallow end of the pool, afraid of the sharks I never saw but *knew* were lurking there.

I am from the bottom bunk, comfortably close with corners, my mother's hand, tranquilized by lullabies, my father's blue boxing class glove. I am from soccer with boys on the playground, between parked cars and the East River, under the overhang of our school and a red, pyramid spider web. I am from bottled letters and things lost over the fence, below the waves, sucked into the current. I am from tiny, reflective shoes my mother liked, layered headbands and dresses every day. I am from the boy's section, “tom-boyed” by impulsive haircuts, wearing my father's clothes to school; enormous sweatshirts and flannel pajama bottoms.

I am from watching girls stuff half baked cookies into their pockets before gym class, listening to the vomit sounds, rumors, ghosts in the bathrooms. I am from makeup lessons up against middle school lockers, from missing cues, from laughing too hard, oblivion. I am from the shadow, the view, cold, black metal windowpanes, swinging on doorknobs, fingers around corners, cats crying at night. I am from my parents' food fights, threats of calling the cops. I am from fermented apple cider spraying all over the wall, glow in the dark frogs, dogs hit by cars. I am from broccoli pizza

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and The Indian in the Cupboard. I am from sharing my bad dreams and my parents' fights for show and tell.

I am from the garden, with the trees that peeled white paper, like the skin on the backs of my knees and legs after a long hike in the mountains. I am from snail covered arms to meet my squeamish relatives, potato bug pets and aphids laying eggs, dying to hold the hissing cockroaches and tarantulas at the science museums. I am from turtle festivals, flying cats, and metamorphosis kits.

I am from moving trucks, from blackouts, low flying planes, and cardboard boxes packed tightly to save space, to get a bargain. I am from flooded basements, mildewed belongings, dumpsters. I am from things forgotten in subway cars, in taxis, my brother's cello, my mother's elephant lamp on the piano. I am from $5 bills found in stairwells, pennies on sidewalks, giant moths between boulders. I am from hot cups of tea, burnt tongues and bitten cheeks, chapped skin, red eyes and hot sweats under layers of fabric in the middle of winter, like the skin on my naked legs hurt by grains of sand on a beach in the middle of a storm.