

You

by Michelle McEwen

You like to point out constellations and tell me about them— thinking this makes you smart. But anyone can point out some stuff and rattle off memorized information. When we are in your uncle's big backyard, at night, looking at the sky, I always wanna tell you how I don't care about no stars and no planets and no moons. I just care about you and your brown eyes and how sometimes you touch my thigh when you talk about the babies you wanna have with me. We'll call the first one Ursa you had said one night and I said I don't know about all that. I wish, instead of pointing out stars and shit, you'd pull out some of those maps in your uncle's garage and point out a place, on Earth, you're gonna take me— like north, like New York. You think I'm obsessed with getting out of here and I am. I just wanna get out of here with you. Your uncle says we are too young to be worried about staying together but he understands and that's why he lets us sit side by side in his backyard (sometimes on school nights). My mama doesn't mind so long as we "talking science". That boy is smart my mama always says and my sister says that you're going places— with or without me. That always makes me panic and she knows it. You don't know it but I'm finally bleeding now (mama was getting worried 'cause at fourteen I shoulda been started) which means if we ever get to doing something in your uncle's backyard, we might could make you your Ursa.

Lately I've been thinking a baby's the only way I might be able to hang on to you, Solomon. I know that sounds silly especially since you always telling me there's no one like me and telling me (and your brothers) how much you love me and how you swear my name could be a planet's— Zenobia. You had said, when I told you my name, that it sounded like I belonged between Mercury and Venus. You said you loved it! I had wanted to kiss you then (and more!) but I didn't want you thinking I was fast. You never try to shorten my

name either although sometimes I wish you would call me Zee like my mama and sister do since you've known me long enough.

Last night, when I came by to your uncle's to see you and those stars I care nothing about, you weren't home. Your uncle said he didn't know where you could be and he shut the door. I panicked just a little and stayed out front for a while until I heard a dog bark and you know how I can't stand no dogs. I ran home 'cause I wasn't trying to get bit. While I was running, though, I was thinking. Thinking how maybe you and me don't have that much in common and how, even though I love you from my top to my toes, I'm never gonna love constellations and comets and craters the way you do. And even though I could listen to you talk all night long about space, maybe you would like someone who does more than just listen. I know this is silly, but my sister always says I should at least pretend, for you, to be into stars and shit. She says that's what girls (and women!) do. I think that's dumb, though. I say the way I love your brown eyes and your hand on my thigh should be enough.

