

Puberty II *The Second Becoming*

by Jennifer Perryman Petsche

Warning.

Warning!

Sure, you grew into that nose,
Your voice evened out.
You now understand, I suppose,
What those feelings were about.

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It came, it screwed with you, it left.
But you didn't hear it chuckle and say
I'll be back again one day,
Like that freaking snowman Frosty.

And it doesn't wear a charming top hat

No.

It's a ski mask. Or ninja gear.
And it no longer goes by the name "puberty."
It uses aliases and disguises,
Like wrinkles and arthritis.

You don't see it coming
And you don't know it's struck
'Til you start to add things up,
And then you're like f---!

Body parts were once simply left and right,
But now they're good and bad.
This one predicts the weather,
And this one looks like your dad's.

You used to spend time *Gettin' Jiggy Wi' It*
--Oh yeah, you had moves--
But now you're just getting *jiggly* with it
And then you need a snooze.

Every day a new discovery!
Gray hair here!
Gray hair there!
Gray hair where?!
More hair!
Less hair!
Weird hair.

Ah! A treasure map in blues and purples!
Brown constellations on your hand!
Rays of sunshine fanning out from your eye!
This is not what you had planned.

But doctors!
They knew, sitting in wait, you poor thing!
Poke you, prod you, squeeze you.
Bill you. Cha-ching cha-ching!

And then they take away
What you love most.
Carbs.
No Bread?! Well that's it.
Might as well be dead.

Oh, luckily! Tomorrow's a new day
And given your age
There's no way
You'll remember to not eat carbs.

So take that. Ha.

You know, during that first puberty
We were blossoming, they said
Becoming.
Men, women
Something better than before!
But now
What the hell are we becoming? No one says.
But I will.
I say we're becoming old.
Brittle. Worn. Forgetful. Flawed.
Saggy. Slow. Cranky. Broad.
And yet.
Still better than before.