

(after Ken Arkind)

## (My Breasts are) Volume Knobs

Turn up

for Perky. For Pussy. For Femme-clowning. For Street-drowning. For worn leather combat heels and pink fitted dresses. For thrift store fur and pigtail buns. For one hundred and eight dollars of metal wire and emerald satin carving me upwards. For Shaven. Silky. Plucked. Stripped. Waxed. Ripped. Painted. Glistening. Decker. Adorned.

For Tits.

Turn down

for a silent walk down riverbank. For quiet questions, wind-stricken wonderings, hunched shoulders, cigarette locked in jaw. For silent eye sliding over curves. For protection from all kinds of men I learned never to trust. For protection of some kind of man I learned to trust, bound to my ribcage like armor, like honor. Like Firm Handshake and Eye Contact. Like the desire to be taken seriously -- to be taken for anything other than my body. For shifty eye and jaw clench. For boy. For man.

For Chest.

Turn center

for Standard. Static. The space \_ between \_ stations. Worn-out yoga top. Blown out shelf bra. Twenty-year-old sweatpants and no makeup. For sick burning muscle, grey heavy head. Wacky Spinster. Childless Aunt. For Desexualized Unfuckability. For too many fucks not given. For giving up on my body, sex, and fair love after it got squeezed out of eight year old lungs like toothpaste under three hundred and forty pounds of drunken uncle. When NO was a gasoline joke tossed into his lit brandy. For the questioning gazes I disappear inside of. For the *Are You a Girl?...or a Boy? Are you in the right bathroom?* For hiding inside neutral. For the safety of a sexless thing. For letting skin and fat and heat just hang. Rest. Dangle. Be.

For Me.



I became something not to grow out of  
but someone to grow into

My friend and I are in the back room of the club, slipping off the  
chilly drizzle of the night,

When she says to me, *“Hey Lady,”*

she tosses the phrase around my shoulders

like the warm fuzzy scarf she has just loosened from her throat.

When she says to me,

*“Look. Whenever you want*

*to let the girls out*

*you let us know.*

*We’ll protect them.*

*That’s what we do,”*

I can learn to grow into a love like that.

I can learn to

Unflinch