

EUGENIA E. GRATTO

TO GO

THE FLOOR LITTLE BEIGE SQUARES, dirt crusted in the cracks. Hurt. Far down. Bite lip. Don't want to cry out. The door swings shut behind. The walls across from the doorway shimmer. Stumbling for a minute, back straight again. The door behind feels. Mama, sorry. Didn't ask to be here. Wish I'd told you what was happening. Wish I'd stayed at home where you'd pat my forehead with a cold washcloth. Sorry I know I made you cry. I'll come home sometime. Promise. At least call. But what will you say when I mention, in passing, that I didn't come to Taco Bell today to eat a steak burrito? Want to have him here to hold my hand. What am I thinking? He never held my hand. Won't hold my hand now. Won't hold my hand again if I don't make it through this. Won't ever hold my hand again if I make it through this. Want to make it. *God the pain*. Can't see. Would have told him. Didn't know. Thought he left me because I was getting fat. Don't want to go through with this but it's *oh my god the pain*. Knives ripping belly, gerbils chewing somewhere, twelve cats fighting. The water from the faucet cold, tight on my face. Splash, splash, can't feel the chill for the pain in my stomach. Thought this was just my period coming finally – better make sure plenty of tampons at home. But it was worse, coming, going, staying longer each time. The sink has a layer of black in it. There is a chart on the back of the door, the initials CHE grease-penciled in red in the blocks for each week. CHE lied.

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thinking? He never
held my hand.

Hasn't cleaned this *oh my god the pain* bathroom in a long long time. This isn't going to take very long. Waited long as I could so no one would get suspicious if I was in here too long. Sat at a booth drinking soda, holding belly, trying to decide. Will not cry. Will not cry out. Mama, please come through that door. Please hold me, please call me Precious and pat me on the head. Don't think I'm going home for a long, long time. Don't know how to do this. I'm afraid, Mama. I think I'm going to die it hurts so bad and I want you to know that I love you. Wish CHE had left the grease pencil on the door so I could write, tell you how I love that you come home so tired you can hardly hold the paper bags in your arms but still willing to hear me tell you about the latest fight he and I had or the dress I bought for only fourteen ninety-five. *Oh my god it's soon*. Fingers find the smooth yellow door of the

...*oh my god* this is it
 this is it this is it can't
 even see it hurts so
 bad and there it is
 lying in my arms but
 it's not right not mine
 doesn't look like me
 not my hair eyes face
 not me...

stall. Swings too wide, bangs the tiles. Scraps of toilet paper on floor and black thread in a knot. Not clean. I picked the wrong place but I have to now. Pushing, pushing, trying to squat down. *Oh my god* there is blood and water and yellow spilling on the floor how am I going to clean it up how I am going to not scream what am I going to do when it cries? What is the manager going to say to me on the floor of this stall without *oh my god* this is it this is it this is it can't even see it hurts so bad and there it is lying in my arms but it's not right not mine doesn't look like me not my hair eyes face not me hanging on to me by thick cord get it out get it out get it out get it off me wrap twist wrap baby won't

make any noise quiet quiet blue face pretty smooth fuzzy like a blanket baby baby not baby need hard edge rubbing against metal trash container smells fishy might be sick splash into the toilet hair sticking mouth look up down what if someone comes in hears me rubbing cord against metal back and forth back and forth it breaks snap baby thing not person not me not my face not my face got to get it away it's trash goes in the metal container too damn small and it's trash it's not my face not mine doesn't look like him he doesn't know anyway probably out there on the corner with the guys what if I walked to the corner sunlight making me squint baby *not baby* in my arms but like something from the store gave it to him and he'd look at me notice me his boys would notice me it's blue like an alien it doesn't have his nose his eyes his mouth not a baby anyway just something lying on tile and how am I going to get out without some idiot noticing me no doll but no baby it's

an it it it I'm watching its lips so blue like robin's egg have to clean up
 take it away before it makes noise with egg lips not like mine are pink
 with lipstick and the boys smile back at me watch my hips think I'm
 pretty still try to get with me and there's got to be something I can do
 with this blue baby can't call it baby got to get it out feet slipping slid-
 ing on blood and water and yellow and if I zip up my coat over it no
 one will ever know and I'm washing my hands the mirror must be
 wrong because my lips look blue too and I'm no baby *no baby* and in
 my coat this thing must get out *I must get out of here* smells of blood and
 ooze and burrito and if the man asks me hot or mild I'll be sick again
 door's open and I'm out out get it out get it out no one near the dumpster
 twilight falling dark cars flashing past lights so bright maybe he'll be at
 the corner tomorrow maybe he'll be there alone maybe I'll go home so
 mama can make me soup and biscuits maybe I can sleep dumpster like
 a bed put it it in it's big limp in the light not my face eyes hands feet
 mouth not my baby *not a baby* just something that happened and now I
 have to catch my bus.