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Against "The Dover Bitch"

Jenny Molberg

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Against "The Dover Bitch"

—after Anthony Hecht

Once I read *a fairly good translation* of Hesiod
and this girl who was me slithered along the spine,
deferential to the men who keep the poetry.
As my daddy said, I've cussed between the lines.
You *musn't judge me for that*. I've many heads.
I speak to suit the rooms they move in.
Xenic breath. In each a brain, *running to fat*.
Though I respect a man's regarded work,
Shakespearean allusions, American
remembrances of a horrible war, when you *show me*
a good time, you only make me smarter.
I do recall that day on shore, your basket of beer
and French perfume, how you pinched
my waist and laughed, your wife none the wiser.
I feel you on my neck, my many necks.
You double-occupy me: the cliffs of Dover
at my back, the mighty empire fallen, and me a girl—
my heady, flicking tongue, overly sweet, my dependable anger
your oyster. Once at a dive, I watched an old man run
his hands over the belly of a beautiful woman,
pregnant the fifth time, then admire her heels
as she clicked away, no choice but to let him touch her.
I'm *really all right*. I smell with my mouth.
Lilacs, bread, a grandpa's musty breath. I know,
I know, you're angry. You also took me to be yours.