Susanna Space

Absence No. 4

Violet print against a field of white, heavy cotton, seams just so, the metal zipper running down my small back that she slides to the hook —

Only I don't remember that, don't recall her cool fingertips, can't see two of us in a bedroom, morning pressing against the windowpanes. Can't quite feel the hush of the maple leaves suspended, a thousand outstretched hands.

And yet I see, do you? Two of us, her hair falling riverish against her collarbone, my downy limbs beneath stiff cotton. She is saying close the door or open it or ask Daddy or where is your brother or yes it's time now.

Who can say what passes between two bodies? Like the moon and its foolish devotion to this hurtling sphere. The weight of cotton against flesh. Yes, she is saying to me. She is watching herself, isn't she? A length of fabric unspooled, silhouette overlaid on summer's rich patterning.

And farther behind a field of blanched New England sky, that absence, hollow pause between dreams where memory slips into place.

I hear her, do you? A single note suspended, a seed hungry to sprout. The zipper's metal teeth. Saying *come*. Saying *now*.

Susanna Space's prose works have appeared in Redivider, Pleiades, The Cincinnati Review, 34th Parallel, South Loop Review, and elsewhere. Her essay "Threshold" won first place in the 2018 Glass Mountain Poetry and Prose Contest, judged by Antonya Nelson. Visit susannaspace.com.