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Our Bodies/Ourselves

Want to leave the car right there
in the midst of traffic, blinkers flashing
like the emotional ambulance it's become,
leave the kids in the back seat
arguing and my daughter yelling
that I 'CANNOT' ground her, that
she's worked too 'HARD' all week
when I grab her arm, squeezing as she
screams 'that HURTS!' Her lipstick
flies against the dashboard, the cap spins
off, hits the steering wheel, I jerk
to a stop for the damn photo shoot
I agreed to drive her to with her friends.
She jumps out, slams the door
so the already loose window
sounds like it's finally shattered,
her friends have hushed, piling out silently.
The woman doing the photo shoot
calls the five kids over to the metro entrance
to take their positions. 'Look like
you're about to do a gig. Remember
you're all supposed to be
in a youth band.' She's clipped
and clueless, clapping her hands
as if they're elementary kids instead of
ninth graders on a Friday evening
itching to get the shoot over with, asking
more than once if she knows when
they will get their free books.
I thought the group of them pictured
in an English-as-a-foreign-language book
would be good to have, their ninth grade faces
frozen in time. The woman doing the shoot

asks Jess to change her Bob Marley shirt
 for something pink, wants my daughter to
 take off the peace sign around her neck.
 I almost say Bob Marley and peace signs
 happen to be in, but this woman's not even sure
 she'll offer them free books though
 I insist the kids expect them
 with their checks. It's on the way home
 my daughter loses it in the car
 when I tell her to stop using so many
 four letter words. She yells that
 I'm 'a frigging HYPOCRITE'
 when Panos in the backseat
 worried that she'll finally be grounded
 pleads 'stop yelling.' 'I'M NOT
YELLING,' she screams, coasting
 down a slope of her own, invisible to me,
 picking up speed until she swerves, missing
 a clean drop, her snowboard spitting ice,
 her skin stinging cold. 'STOP'
 I'm shouting now, but she's too fast,
 too drugged with newfound power.
 'You CAN'T GROUND ME' she repeats,
 'I can live ANYWHERE,' the clear drop
 no longer a threat, she's going
 faster than she's ever gone,
 tensing her body, the snowboard all
 she clings to, taking her past trees, past
 the cautious skiers, past all I can't see
 when I call her father on the cell
 to say she might turn up at his place.
 'It's a crisis,' I'm saying, my head
 in as many pieces as the window
 inside its metal sleeve. He wants to know
 is she or isn't she going to come over.
 'It's a *crisis!*' I repeat the way she hurtled
 the words like ammunition.