

LESLEY WHEELER

## Adolescence Is a Disorder of the Mouth

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*Your necklines are too low*, she says, and scowls  
at the cloud-tops of my cleavage, as she does now  
all through every dinner. Her dad inhales  
the minestrone through his nose; I blush  
in its steam. Like a tourist straining through veils  
of haze, I gawk as her breasts erupt beneath  
a succession of clingy tees—today in B cups  
but bursting through the alphabet. It's sweet,  
maybe, how we stare, but the air becomes hypoxic  
when she pronounces on my lipstick, the key  
of my lullabies, the trash I watch. I agree.  
I am *low-brow*. My pitch is catastrophic.  
But it's better when I say so. She is too  
perfect. A voice from a peak. No fear. No rue.