

Life Size

Jennifer Liberts

The iron bar
made a clumsy waltz
down the numbers, ninety-nine, ninety-
eight, the rumble

of silence before
a freight train whooshes
furiously by;
then brittle nothing—
dust and a lick

of black asphalt.
Increments, a daily
definition of my
solidity in ounces.
Ninety-three, my

belly swells pregnant
with swallowed youth.
Lettuce, broccoli, the indulgent
rice cake.
Acid eaten fingernails

reciting calories like beads
of a rosary, praying
for invisibility. An electron—
gender free, the fetus
undifferentiated.

Mom feeding me carrots
like sugar cubes
to a prize foal, Dad
puffing out his cheeks,
a blow fish at dinner time.
I clutch the porcelain
bowl like my favorite china
doll, retching words,
hands, tongues, bruised
virginity swallowed

by the gaping mouth
of my silence. Pretty
box of wooden
painted bodies—
stackable selves.