tips a breath of laudanum
from an opal vial
shadows hide from themselves
everything is sea pink  translucent
she lies on blankets of lady’s cushion
thinks the sky is a looking glass
simply sees who she is
which is no simple thing
   living in constellations
   & in habits of starlings
   in secrets she holds as her dad
   disappears up the last ray of light
She hears the voice of water
yelling down a glassy stream
dark eyes reflect
as her mother floats in a paper boat
   leaving lilies in her wake
she chases after  where her uncle waits
   under cherry blossoms
   his dead men’s fingers
   finding ways to places
   long purples shouldn’t go
she becomes a field of sunflowers
escaping with only her yellow hat on
her boyfriend
ready to beat up any winking boy
or trip them on the dance floor
is pounding at the door
covered in blood-red roses
ready for a pity fuck
she breaks the spell of black-eyed jacks
draping walls of wisteria
cutting off frayed edges
refusing to be sewn up in a pillow case
or dried flat in a book
rolling her eyes takes another drop of tincture
she is an ectopic single-cell multiplying
   in avenues of goodbyes
but keeps falling into the arms of moon flowers
    whispering secrets
        to lover after lover after lover

Girl in the Woods won first prize in the Sentinel Literary Quarterly Poetry Competition (July 2020)
judged by Terry Jones

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