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For Katherine

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For Katherine

Sitting on the witness stand
her feet did not reach the floor,
a microphone bobbing
in small hands.

Her mother and sister
out in the hallway,
witnesses
for the prosecution.

Her brothers
witnesses
for the defense.

Feet wrapped around chair rungs
could not prevent her
slipping and sliding.
She looked out
at a room
full of strangers,
save for the father
who had brought her there.
Soft voice lost
amid the mahogany and marble.
Her thumb hovered close to her mouth.

Daddy took her into his room,
undressed her, put his penis
inside her mouth.
then between her legs.
Told her not to tell.
She got a sore throat,
could not pronounce
the word "gonorrhea."
She heard daddy say
he wanted to throw
a dart
through her picture.

by Nicole Raveman