

The Multitude

Hannah Faith Notess

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God save the poets who wield a prose writer's gift for language and clarity: Yes, you, Hannah Faith Notess, your voice is immediately felt, thoughtful, and concise. The author of a chapbook (*Ghost House*) and memoir (*Jesus Girls: True Tales of Growing Up Female and Evangelical*), Notess is an editor for Response magazine.

Compliment

*You said my naked back looked strong to you.
My sloped, hunched shoulders flickered in my brain,
but then I thought of the junior high girl
I briefly became—who cut the pictures out
of her ballet books, who rewound the tape
of Fonteyn draping her back like silk across
Nureyev's arm, then turned her own small back
to the bathroom mirror. Every variation
of that shape she could think of, she practiced,
till her muscles tensed like twisted swing chains
on the playground. Unwound, stretched to her limit,
she pushed against the future and reached me,
her future. I arched my back, a bridge to her,
and said, half to her, half to you, Thank you.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (Spring 2016)

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