

## BRUISING

by Despy Boutris

The night we met,  
you socked the boy  
who had pushed me

against the wall  
and stuck his tongue  
down my throat,

palming me so hard  
he nearly bore a hole  
in my jeans,

cigarette breath  
caught in my throat,  
tongue thrusting

into my mouth,  
swallowing my *Stop!*,  
my useless fists.

That same night  
you and I  
ran to the lake and swam

half-clothed,  
hanging our t-shirts  
and jeans from trees.

I had no business wanting  
you, but I am built  
to break rules—

shuddering breath,  
searching for someone  
to call home.

How we swam  
so close  
that I frog-kicked

your calf, and you lunged  
at me, wrestling  
as an excuse to touch.