

I NEVER WANTED TO BE A LADY ANYWAY

by Sarah Vance

I do not know the man who set forth
the idea of womanhood. I wonder
if he laughed as he crafted characteristics
of behavior that contradict and confine.

I do know that from a young age I
was commonly chastised for feminine
failures. Their concept of “lady-like” lorded
over me, a standard clearly commanded to attain.

My spirit broken in the bending
to fit their binary. Yet she saw me, and
her fingertips set to patiently patching
places long since shattered.

The parts of me they found unworthy,
her mouth calls holy in their nightly worship.
I no longer mold myself to fit anything, besides
her hands, which never break, but boldly build.

And while the descendants of the man
who defined us for decades, shake their
heads at us in the streets, she steadily
reaches for my hand, her love liberating.