

A visit from the candy girl



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First I gave her my black clothes and journals,
stuffed in a bag with the wine spilled inside—

the picnic I carried in case I got hungry.

Then I gave her the piece of my heart you cut out

that afternoon after movies and cocktails,
gimlets with cherries and orange peels. Silly,

she said and pressed it to her lips like something meringue,
tucked it in her bra and did a dance—

a heel turned toward heaven, a palm full of mint,
a smile like a ginger snap cracking.

And before I could ask for it back—sorrow/twitching wrist—
she lifted her pink gum skirt and ran, leaving me

in the shine, sticky and bare, white sweet and light,
the taste of butterscotch right here—see—on my tongue.

leslie anne
mcilroy

Leslie Anne Mcilroy won the 2001 Word Press Poetry Prize for her full-length collection *Rare Space* and the 1997 Slipstream Poetry Chapbook Prize for her chapbook *Gravel*. She also took first place in the Chicago Literary Awards Competition judged by Gerald Stern. Leslie's poems are published in numerous journals and anthologies including *American Poetry: The Next Generation*, *The Emily Dickinson Award Anthology*, *The Mississippi Review*, *Nimrod International Literary Journal*, *Pavement Saw*, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Swink*. Leslie works as a freelance copywriter in Pittsburgh, PA, where she teaches workshops for the International Poetry Forum. She served for five years as editor and cofounder of *HEArt* — Human Equity Through Art — the nation's only journal of literature and art devoted to confronting discrimination and promoting social justice.

