SUE BURTON

Letter from Antoinette Bope to Her Sister Mabel, May 24, 1902

—for my great-aunt Nettie, 1880-1902

Oh, Mabel, that that I feared.

Questions

loosed & plaguing me at night. I wish to tether them & my body that demands I touch certain parts.

Could it be the Soul has like demands, for all Eternity?

'Spose God would look down & say I have Sinned. Though Mac claims Sin's not a constant.

But it all went so fast. & the Truth is—

writing

this morning makes the letterpaper qualmy.

Papa would not approve as Mac is not prosperous & not a Lutheran.

Have found a Mrs. Beatty. Rickety stairs up & up, five pine chairs & a picture of Jesus.

She poked my belly through my dress & took my money & said, come back on the morrow—

Mabel, the morrow is upon me.

11 Beloit Poetry Journal Summer 2015

All night, dreamt of the Terrible Shooting-& who would be next, when even the President can't be kept safe? I don't like to think about Death.

Clock.

Unwind: be New Year's again today Unsuspected, Mac still a glimpse, curly black hair in need of a trim. bit of a lisp.

Oh, that my face were not so broad & plain.

Fear, I am dizzy.

God has slacked his Grip.

Rickety Stairs, railings corded with rags, have Mercy on me.

(Yet how can Sin be raveled from the Soul?)

Mrs. Beatty has a chipped tooth. Though my landlady saysoh, by all accounts, she's-

if only-but, Mabel, what other?

Always,