

JULIA LISELLA
Intimate Friendships

They are girls, though taller and more slender than you,
brushing their long hair in your bathroom,
washing their armpits, spitting into your sink.
Sometimes you can even touch their skin, help them
with towels and bra straps, hold their determined bony chins
in the palm of your hand, briefly. Sometimes
you kiss them hello, hug them firmly.
You know their noises of pain, and you know
when they're screaming because some boy they know
called, said, what? You can't quite catch it but it's
mainly nothing.

You know the smell their jackets leave behind,
what kind of detergent their mothers use. You know
your daughter may love some of them until she is old
and forget some of them. Pictures of them fill your albums
at 4, at 8, and at 13 with their tongues
hanging out of their mouths like some bad heavy metal CD cover.

You know they are someone else's children
in your house, in your car, at your table.