**Saint Lucy**

Lindsey Warren

Stars as I knew them, or drew them—xanthic, crystalline, shimmering, shimmying—crayoned their five points, fixed in a moving sky. These designed stars from their pages shone. They saw the city streets patterned in their geometries, the turns of all four seasons, my persistent desire to stroke their glossy colored-in faces. Nightly I slept in a sleeping bag by a plug-in light to record on white paper their heaven that was glowy and private.

I was twelve. I had a notebook full of stars.

I was in love with a saint, Saint Lucy, the martyr who carries her own eyes on a plate; I could never tell if it was for safe-keeping or in offering. There stood a statue of her in one of the Gothic Catholic churches in the heart of the city. Her hair was carved in curls; she resembled a clean-shaven Jesus. I would take her eyes if she gave them to me. I would kiss her if she allowed it. I would fall asleep that night and dream she threw her eyes into the night sky; they would become stars, and I would use every synonym for *sparkle* and *beautiful* and *secret* to describe them to her until she was convinced of their splendor.

One cold Sunday morning I went to that church. Earlier, I had carefully cut out, with scissors, a page from my book of stars. I had folded it up neatly and put it in my coat pocket. I stood before the statue of Saint Lucy; waves of votive candles in red glass holders were incandescent at her bare feet. I wanted to tell her I loved her. I pulled the paper out of my pocket and placed it on top of one of the lit candles. I watched the flame touch, spread, consume the paper. The drawn stars were eaten by their true element. I looked up at the statue; *To love, one must sacrifice,* I thought—or so I was told by so many grown ups. I knew nothing of love’s burnt edges.

As I walked away from the silent figure of Saint Lucy, I put my hands in my coat pockets. A strong yet unnamed feeling began to rise in my stomach, I tried to squash it by sitting in one of the pews and closing my eyes. The music of more feet in the church padded my ears.

*Regret*.

The word came to me as I opened my eyes and stared at the altar’s unlit candles. The more I sat in the feeling, the more I became it, and a grin spread across my face.

I felt regret. I was an adult.