

On the Anniversary of My Due Date, You Ask to Braid My Hair
By Alicia Rebecca Myers

The astronomer explains that Arcturus is the second-brightest star visible from Colorado, and on this mesa in the dark, by only the dim of red headlamps, you ask to braid my hair. You will turn eleven in nine days, my expected-to-be Leo. I think of Messier 11, the cluster that doesn't resemble the number but rather wild ducks, how you are also messy and will one day migrate away from me, hopefully as a man who can do his own laundry. Your hands fumble in my hair, and I know this might be the last time you ever interleave its strands. When you leave, what will the sky look like that first night? Sometimes, I catch myself listening to music with the intent of storing it up, afraid that my other ear will give out, and I do the same with you, stockpiling every conversation, Bashō in Kyoto longing for Kyoto. The astronomer says *focus*. Arcturus is in the constellation Boötes. My parents used to call me Bootsie. I miss my dad and the child I was even as you braid my hair, and for a moment I am young again, the way stars appear to overlap despite great distances.