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Seek

Rachel C. Reeher
Winthrop University

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seek by rachel

You're crouched beneath the cover of a blue hydrangea bush, the salty-sour smell of bagged soil when you breathe. You hug your knees tight against your chest as they call 18-19-20 from the backyard. In the shade, the hair on your legs is less noticeable and you like that. The branches of the bush make room for you, bending and wrapping their arms around your small frame. You hold your breath so they don't shake, don't give you away. Ready or not. Floppy feet of neighborhood kids bound across the porch, and you can hear the planks beneath them bend and creak. They taunt and laugh and boo! and stalk around like they're omniscient. You think they might be. Through a window in the leaves, you see the tall one, Kyle, the one who said your belly should be smaller. He rounds the corner by the fence and then he's out of sight, but someone is closer now. You look down and there are two black tennis shoes, the ones with the mismatched laces and the puffy tongue, the ones real skateboarders wear. Haven't you heard of Tony Hawk? Squeeze yourself tighter. Make yourself smaller. Don't let them win. Come out come out wherever you aaaaare. Keith spits into the bush and it lands on the shoulder of your new shirt—the green one with the fuzzy puppy. You know you've lost but you can't find it in you to stand up, the coolness of the hydrangea, too safe.



rachel c reeher editor-in-chief

Rachel is a senior English major whose focus is creative writing, primarily fiction, and will be pursuing an MFA after her undergraduate studies. She loves black tea, Indian food, and The New Yorker.

