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LUCY WATERS

this body

this body had been
hugged, held, kissed, cuddled, loved

this body has been
shoved, yanked, hit, kicked, dragged, twisted, poked, slammed,
thrown, held down,
tickle-tortured, molested, violated

this body has
flinched, cringed, felt fear in every inch of its flesh, gone numb

this body has held razor blades
this body has dragged razor blades across itself
this body has been hated by its own mind

this body has taken martial arts lessons
its mind dreaming of how big and strong this body would become
dreaming of how this body could then overpower other bodies
male bodies
adult bodies
his body

this body has felt reality when it punched the punching bag
and the punching bag hardly budged
when he put his hands behind his back and said, "go ahead,
give me your best shot"
and this body did, right in the center of his body's stomach
and all he did was laugh

this body has starved itself trying to be skinny
stuffed itself trying to be bootylicious
pumped iron trying to be strong
this body has given itself to many men
without the consent of its mind
this body has been to the rooftops of high-rises
looking down and yearning for the ostensible salvation of
oblivion

held back not by hope but by fear
this body has swallowed dozens of pills at a time

this body has
survived

its mind has turned things around
rediscovered love
redefined strength
re-envisioned beauty
recaptured the joy of itself

bless your body, my sister, for she houses your soul.

Lucy Waters was born and raised in Toronto. She is a vegan and cares about animal rights, the environment and peace and justice for humans.