



x | b

FIVE

You know it will all return;
 you know this.
 You buy a box of band-aids,
 as a joke really.
 You tape them all,
 the whole box, you tape
 them all across your
 middle, just to be funny.
 But you don't tell anyone
 about the band-aids,
 even though you know
 they would laugh: they
 are for skin wounds.

Temporarily you believed
 in the books you had read
 about the importance and
 power of the moon and
 of cycles. You briefly believed
 in all that. And then
 you bled, and you raged
 at that, at all their talk
 of the beauty of cycles,
 that rot. You felt
 no beauty in your
 broken middle. And now
 you dread the cycles your
 body spins in; you hate
 the cycles you circle through,
 around, again, around.

Menstruating #2: Surrendering

Deborah Lynn Owen

Sometimes you slap your arms,
 whack the flesh until it's red
 as the skin on your palms,
 as red as the pain
 inside cannot be named a color.
 You want
 the red skin
 of your arms, want that
 sting bright in front
 and outside of you
 because the inside hurt
 is too much,
 too entire, and it
 makes you sad all
 through, the sad reaching
 as deep and as far as the
 no-color ache, sad inside you
 because you know,
 you know that it will
 return. It will return.
 You know this.