

Manhandling

at the foot of my normal bed
I listened to floorboards creak
shifting my weight from one foot
to the other my mother made dinner

while you explained to me
the one song you love so much
from a Sondheim musical you said
it's the moment that makes the show

so sad you said you wanted
us to be friends you've had bad
days & I seem so nice because I'm smiling
hanging onto your words as I rip

up grass & watch it blow out of my hands
you want to know if I like girls
if I wear dresses if sometimes
I think things I'm not supposed to

like I'm ugly or
I drag the desk chair across
my carpet turn on all the lights listen
to my mother drop a pan downstairs

& curse she waits for the water to boil
I wait for you to call
because you wanted me
to know you thought I was older

when you said I like girls strung up
& slapped around maybe even
crying it just turns me on you get it
right? then offered me a ride

home but I walked I want you
to call because you know something secret
you said: tell me the truth
& like a snake I broke my jaw open

i. lying ghazal

because I've got you huddled up in my brain, I don't like having to lie;
I said you gave me a ride home, which was a lie.

my sister saw me walking up the driveway in yesterday's t shirt,
& when she asked me about it later, I lied

& said all we did was talk. I never say the bad part
out loud. the bad part was when you grabbed my wrist while we were lying

in the grass. the bad part was under the tree & I thought: here we are at the bad
part. here we are at the part where you sit me down in my own brain & say *don't lie*

to me. You wanted it, Julia. some nights the answer is no & some nights
I remember the rest of the story, hands on my wrist, in the manicured grass, lying.

ii. lying ghazal

my sister doesn't know anything about lying
on a gurney. how it's not like the movies because doctors want you to lie

down when you sit up, & they push you slower than expected. when I saw my sister
naked I screamed, which made her laugh, *we shared a womb*. I lied

& told her she just startled me. I'm so scared of you,
I never tell the whole story. there's always some half-lie:

all we did was talk. it's true, I've never had sex,
so when my sister asks, I give you a different name. that way she can't tell I'm lying.

today, facebook suggested we be friends: *Julia, here are some people you may know*.
my sister & I have the same face, but sometimes that's a lie, too.