

“R”

By Olivia Mock

This photography series, along with the poem, work to depict the conflicts that exists within conversations about rape.

*Relatives and Rape Ropes*

Mother. I was 7, but hushed  
while searching definition.  
The word publicly ripped  
from the grasp of my air;  
the “R” word.

Naïve walls, shattered ice,  
torn uprooted gravel, possibly  
applying to anyone around  
I was told to never  
talk about it.

Father, I know generation gaps  
but the joke was never funny, like the word.  
I know you wouldn't laugh at rope  
burns caused by telephone wires wrapped  
around my vocals

as they whisper. I'm suspended inches above water  
dangling. Drowning in weeds trying to escape saliva.  
These night terrors have watches for eyes  
and an endless supply of belts.  
Corsets un-coursed.

Brother, I'm fileted;  
flesh peeled and flights unplanned.  
Your friends might be fishing, you are  
what you do, but that isn't you;  
hooked and reeling, stealing.

Fire is fed by oxygen like lighters  
last longer without cigarettes. Against my skin  
let this word breath as I yearn new cells.  
Disconnecting yourself doesn't stop  
flame from spreading.

Sister, beware.  
Mourn manner among memory  
buried with the rape word, fear  
malicious muscles manifested within  
those you know who hide behind  
windows not mirrors.  
Write silence on tiny squares of dyed  
paper, place it under your tongue,  
let it  
d i s s o l v e.