

LESLEY WHEELER

Myrtle Beach Convergence

Spring breaks in an early tide
of undergraduates, shivering
in their halter tops while I,
resigned to pallor, loll in an indoor pool.
My swimsuit has a granny skirt.
Myrtle is sacred to Venus, whose thighs
are serious too. Soon I girdle
my waist with a hotel towel,
milk stinging in my breasts, and tow
my daughter back across the parking lot.

An SUV full of aged golfers halts to explore me.
One, his vision feeble, finds a page in his binder,
holds up the scarlet letters: SHOW ME.

What can he mean? I wonder.
He shrugs and, impervious to shame,
revs into a nearby slot. Gradually,
my dense atmosphere traps the heat
and boils my rocky plains.

Venus grows old,
the skin on her belly pouches,
but she's the same as she ever was,
strangled and hidden in poisonous gases.