At the Feet of the David

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Class of 2018

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This poetry is available in The Mercury: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury/vol2018/iss1/50
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I press as close as the glass barrier allows
and let the yellow light
from the windowed dome above wash
over me, neck dropping back, mouth
falling open, like a baby bird
just minutes old, calling to be fed.
I wait for him to bestow upon me
the knowledge, the perspective
he has, the understanding I crave.

He is everything they said he would be.
Massive but delicate, more beautiful,
more human than stone should ever be allowed
to be. I see what every art professor
has always raved about: the defined
musculature, the contrapposto
stance, the smoothness of the marble,
the steady gaze into the distance,
the legend reborn, and me, standing
here so small in his presence.

But there is more than that. The look
in his eyes and the gears turning behind them,
the rock that hasn’t been thrown
yet resting gently on his thigh. I can
see him deliberating, planning the battle
to come: how his agile feet will
spring through the grass, how his shoulder
will drop back, how the muscles in his arm
will tense and release, the air
in his lungs forced out with a grunt as he
does so. He calculates the trajectory
of the airborne stone before he lets it fly.
He knows where it will strike.
He knows how his opponent will fall.

How is he so confident in the face of a Goliath?
How is he so assured of his victory when so much stands in his way?
How do you beat a giant when you’re just a woman,
little more than five feet tall, twenty-one years old,
disgusted with the world you live in
and desperate to fix it?

Throng of tourists with their cameras and guidebooks
and *Top Ten Things to do in Florence* checklists wade around me, like swells of the ocean trying to loosen my grip on the pier. I do not let go. I cling to the David because he has the answers I need, I'm sure of it. He knows how to beat every Goliath plaguing this fucked up world. He must know. He's survived every other Goliath he's faced, looked Hitler and Mussolini in the eyes and watched them fall. He can tell me how to defeat the Goliaths we face today, as long as I wait here long enough to hear him speak.