

Bridget O'Bernstein

LEDA IN A NIGHTCLUB

I knew the story of Leda and Zeus, and that it was rape.

I studied it at twelve years old after seeing a painting in Italy.

Leda's body looked full like a milk trough, and curved like milk out of a jug

The way she held the swan pulled on me. Her grip on the creature

Desire like a mango blossom, a flail chest, like three horse whips
working at once

She seemed so unashamed of her body. So, I began to imagine being with Leda

With Leda in a nightclub, us in leather pants, her with no top on. We wave
sparklers, the lights go on & off & on again

Her face like lightning over a lake

I imagined telling Leda I love her

Leda laughs, pedaling the red bike ahead

Magenta petals, blue basket, bit of ribbon in her hair

We are together in a field & she appears full, her round body naked
Ready pears in her basket make a noise you can imagine easily

But Leda would eventually grow tired.

Or I imagined she would

Leda, I might say, riding behind her, I miss you

Leda would stop her bike and turn, one naked foot on the earth,
Bridget, I'm right here.



Bridget O'Bernstein grew up in Brooklyn and received her MFA in poetry from Syracuse University. In 2019, she won the Indiana Review Poetry Prize and was a finalist for the Ruth Stone Poetry Prize and the American Literary Review Poetry Award. Her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *The Iowa Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Bennington Review*, and *Birdfeast* among others.