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By convention there is us

By convention there is sweet. By convention there is bitterness. By convention hot and cold, by convention, color. But in reality there are only atoms and the void – Democritus

Symmetry: even keel of a spin cycle. Your underwear
poised against mine.

What remains when the last petal goes (I love you not):
the still yellow center, turgid clothead, fallow.

5:17 Metuchen Metropark. Snowflakes beg
the question of singularity.

What is one when one
is nothing? A pair of us, socks on the line.

Still life with chain link fence and clear eyes
billboards, stalwart and miffed

at their own forbearance. Wayside sphinxes
proclaim our roundtrip fates. At atomic level

any part will do. Spectroscopy reveals
we are precise. So why your nail clippings still

under my bed? By convention there is sweet.
In reality, a schema, fundamentals.

What can be said of elegance
in the rest stop parking lot off 287 North

ours the first bus to leave a muddy track
across the snow? By convention

there is bitterness. In reality a symmetry
sloughed off with every cell. The tide gnaws

at the shores of Thrace in which there is a logic.
Since then, Democritus, we've weathered

erosion, degradation of the stratosphere. You had it
backwards: by convention there is a narrative.

In reality, a bitterness at the root. Your hair
two months after the fact. Grey. Our substance

is hamartia. Blind necessity. The way the wash cycle
spins one pillowcase into uneven keel.

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Asya Graf's short fiction, poetry and literary criticism have appeared in *Anderbo*, *Vestal Review*, *Best Poem* and *Comparative Literature*, as well as in electronic literary zines and blogs. She currently lives in New York City and teaches high school English in the Bronx.