

Ode to FlorIDa

Amy Parker

hail-like rain pounds the aluminum siding, the hurricane-suSTAINable
windows
bolt me down in the hospital with lightning, thunder
makes me shiver/orgasm
o family-friendly phallus
is Lake Okeechobee your belly button
tanning in the sun
i wonder

cold from penis envy, i migrated from my mother's coal mine
to where the heat and humidity heave in holy
maTRIMony, where i was conceived coincidentally
probably on independence day, a birthday present
to my father, native to this state

covered with blood and amniotic fluid, i was born
bipolar in Clearwater where
tourists come to gawk at erosion (quartz-sandy beaches)
is Tampa Bay the space between my legs
i wANDered

all the way up to and including Tallahassee

Tallahassee is a miserable
looking place
certainly, she said.¹

all the secrets lie tANGLEd in Spanish moss
and in the knotted roots of southern live oaks

whispers the volume of hurricanes
sent home across the Atlantic, Gulf
layers of liMEstone ruins with caves
as bubbles in the land-batter, sinkholes pop, springs
ejaculate
the water will (eventually) bury its dead.

¹¹ Laura Wirt Randall to William Wirt, September 30, 1827, quoted in Anya Jabour, “The Privations & Hardships of a New Country’: Southern Women and Southern Hospitality on the Florida Frontier,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 75 (1997): 262.