Honors 201: Inquiries in the Ancient World  
Parody: Sappho “Translations”  
Kate Frakes

Why Don’t You Ask Me What to Wear?

Why don’t you ask me what to wear,

I have a splendid banana clip  
from Claire’s to give you, Cleis,  
that I’ve saved from my youth  
 and my mother  
always said that in her  
day a beaded leather tassel  
around the head was thought  
to be radical indeed

But we were dark:

A girl  
whose hair is blonder than  
Madonna should wear no  
thongs or clips  
but a hundred braids  
with strange little marbles  
attached to the ends

I haven’t heard a word from you

I haven’t heard a word from you

Frankly I wish I were dead.  
When you left, you sighed  
loud and long; you told me,  
“I’m afraid you’ll have to let me go,  
Sappho. I’ll call you.”

I said, “Go do what you need to do  
but remember who you   
leave behind in this supply closet.

“If you forget me, think  
of the things we whispered to each other  
and all the saliva we’ve swapped

“all the pulled hair,  
cast-off jackets, sweat stains  
and trod-upon toes

“lips gone a bit numb, yes  
and sprawled on flats of toilet paper rolls  
the two of us, with everything we  
could wish for but also a terrible fear   
of the janitor’s return

“while the muffled speech of passersby  
made us jump, interrupting our whispers…

He is More Than the Diggity Shiznit

He is more than a right homie G,  
he is the diggity shiz,  
the dawg I’d share my sofa with,  
who’ll sit and conversate with me  
and laugh, making my heart skip.

When we meet in a dark alleyway  
my grill falls right out my mouth,  
my tongue hangs out,  
my veins all wonky,  
I go half cross-eyed  
and hear nothing but a wedding in county judge chambers

So whip out that deodorant,  
shake like a junkie with a case of DTs,  
blood drain from my face  
like a midnight shank

Oh baby, oh baby,

I think I’m gonna’ die.