

Tankas for Runaways

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When is it my turn
to be able to say mom
or dad? Where am I
going this time? “A new home,”
they say. Maybe this one’s forever.

You raise your hand and
I flinch. Your brow furrows, eyes
slice my skin, I brace
for your blow, you smile.
“Not where people can see, dear.”

One bottle, two more.
The only thing sadder than
My best friends being
Jack, Brandy, Jim, and Mary
is this bottle’s bare bottom.

He’s at the corner
of the busy Mini Mart
Again. Paper cup
in hand. The change doesn’t clang,
and nobody gives him cash.

Whose needle is this?
Fuck if I care. Shoots the same.
Quick, run through my veins.
Help me, help me ignore this
pain. I see the light once more.