

BLOOD SHEETS

by Emily Breeze

NINA: I woke up while it was still dark out because my legs were wet and I couldn't figure out why but then I realized my thighs were covered in blood which hasn't happened to me since like high school, but basically I just woke up in the dark wrapped in a blood sheet which feels like a harbinger of doom if there ever was one. I was overdue to change the sheets anyway but once I did and showered and sponged off the mattress I absolutely was not gonna be able to go back to sleep especially with this cycling thought that I am a sooth-sayer or like my body wants to remind me in the middle of these Senate Judiciary hearings that despite my feelings of sapphic invulnerability to the overturn of Roe v Wade there's very little difference between me and Gerri Santoro in the disposability of my body should I begin to bleed beyond my own capacity.

There's a biblical thing- there's two parallel stories about Jesus and bleeding women, and the only reason I know about them is because in tenth grade I picked *The Handmaid's Tale* for a my winter break reading and I got pretty obsessed so I did all of this unnecessary research about the tyrannical history of Christianity and women and what the bible says about women which is mostly terrible but at one point Jesus goes to somewhere to heal this man's daughter. He goes to heal a twelve year old girl who has fallen into a coma or malaise or maybe died and on his way there he gets mobbed by this crowd and this one woman reaches out to touch his clothes because she's been bleeding nonstop for twelve years and she desperately wants to be cured but she doesn't want to ask for a miracle, so she just reaches out to touch his clothes and the second she touches him, she's healed, and like, Jesus feels himself heal her when she touches his clothes so he turns around and acknowledges her before going into the house where he then heals the twelve year old girl. So there's this weird suggestion in the bible that Jesus can cure periods but just chooses not to unless they last for twelve years or put you in a coma which, when I read it, seemed remote and ridiculous to me compared to *The Handmaid's Tale* which felt immediate and true because the experience of being abused by men was more true to my tenth grade life than being healed by them.

I didn't watch the tv show. I'm not watching the Senate Judiciary hearings either, I think probably for the same reason. I try not to spend my time thinking about the ways in which men want to cure me or rape me or curatively rape me except when I can't help it because I wake up covered in blood and I realize I look like all the other women to them. I don't know if that will keep me safe or not.