What to Say When a Certain Kind of Man Begs for His Life

"Mantids are sometimes called praying mantids or soothsayers (Greek, manti = soothsayer) because their forelegs are held in a supplicatory position resembling prayer. Nearly 2,000 species have been described."

—**Timothy Gibb**, *Contemporary Insect Diagnostics*

When I say you're a snack I mean
for real. Look at you. You got the motion,
that roll and roll swagger. The way you swivel
your head and track me with those big red eyes—
you see what I'm not: the petal-limbed orchid,
the dancing devil's flower, hands up. No unicorns
here, either; I'm just like other girls. And I'm not
a leaf or a ghost, I couldn't hide if I wanted to.
I pray out in the open. I can leap like a cat, adapt
in mid-air. I can tear a hummingbird right out
of the blue, a different kind of honeyeater. Isn't
that what you came for? You already lost your
head for me, though you'll tell yourself it's all
for the thrill, all for the kids. And when I turn
back for that first kiss, you'll ignore every
warning, even the last: My God, look at you.
Look at what you made me do.

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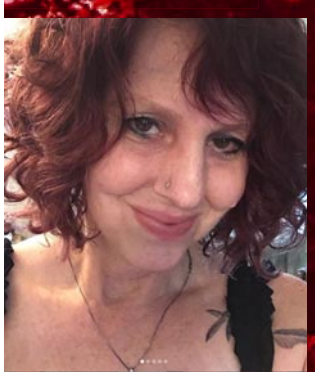

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A two-time National Book Award Finalist, Laura Ruby is the author of the novels BONE GAP and THIRTEEN DOORWAYS, WOLVES BEHIND THEM ALL, among others. Her short fiction and poetry have appeared or will appear in *The Florida Review, Beloit Fiction Journal, The Sycamore Review, The Dallas Review, Diode, Cleaver, Poetry South, Clackamas Literary Review, Nimrod,* and *Rattle.* She teaches fiction writing in the low-residency MFA programs at Hamline University and Queens University. She makes her home in the Chicago area.