



## VERSE IN PLACE

JULIA KOETS

### THE SCIENCE OF \_\_\_\_\_

“The French, I believe, have agreed on the term ‘aviation’  
in case they ever succeed in flying.” — *Century Magazine*, October 1891

Let’s agree on a word for \_\_\_\_\_ in case  
we ever succeed in \_\_\_\_\_. To the girls  
who lie down in fields, their bicycles  
on their sides, too, like horses  
asleep in the sun, know this: even though  
\_\_\_\_\_ is not a science yet, it will be.

When you button your shirt in the morning,  
fingers fumbling to fasten the circles,  
to thread them through, know that we invented  
the word for this science from bud, as if  
a row of tender orchids will soon bloom  
down your chest, a new branch of botany.

Science of radio, science of sleep,  
science of kindness, science of the wheel.  
One day we will study \_\_\_\_\_ like we study  
flight or photography. Let’s agree  
on this: everything exists on a spectrum,  
word derived from specter, science of startle,  
science of the remarkable. Two girls  
in a field test the science of buttons.  
Their shirts soon to break into yellow blooms.

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**JULIA KOETS** is the author of three books: *The Rib Joint: A Memoir in Essays*, a LAMBDA Literary Award finalist; *PINE*, a Florida Book Award winner; and *Hold Like Owls*, a South Carolina Poetry Book Award winner. The recipient of a 2023 National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship, an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award, and a National Science Foundation Grant, Julia's essays and poems have been published or are forthcoming in literary journals including *Creative Nonfiction*, *Indiana Review*, *Nimrod*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and *Portland Review*. She earned her MFA at the University of South Carolina and her PhD in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Cincinnati. She's an assistant professor of creative writing at the University of South Florida.

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“Strength,” a Tarot illustration representing a radiation of power coupled with inner understanding and love. | [HENRY CRAWFORD ADAMS](http://henrycrawfordadams.com)