



From Broken Believers

Catherine Gonick

## Now More Than Ever

In today's electronic age, "slut" is an identity  
with no escape.—Leora Tanenbaum, *I Am Not a Slut*

you can play the "good" slut,  
dress as a woman with power

to reclaim Ishtar's body,  
yet online, *the line between*

*sexy and slutty is razor-thin,*  
your panopticon with its

all-seeing eye is not  
your friend as it steals

body and home, mouths  
speech for frenemies, grows

a homeless body of its own,  
spreads sex like miasma.

When it rapes you coolly  
as a ghost, a mist of people

who want only to see and  
discuss you as you choose

to don, or not, a burka

or bikini for a swim, you  
won't know you've been  
raped till you've also  
been stoned. No one knows  
anyone, only slut code,  
so best dress as told,  
whether local preference  
is for meat on display  
or wrapped. Other rules  
you can break like old bones.  
To break out you can only  
pray, for some terrorist  
to take down the grid.

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Catherine Gonick's poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Boston Review*, *Forge*, *Jewish Women's Literary Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Sukoon*, and other literary journals. She divides her time between New York and California.