Beit Shemesh

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.7302
BEIT SHEMESH

Groups of Ultra-Orthodox Jewish protesters have been picketing a new girls’ school. They say their religious sense of modesty is offended by the sight of the girls…
—BBC

Sluts, they protest, as if the girls are monsters with serpents’ tails, don’t wear sleeves up to a fist’s length. Collarbones showing. Tramps, they say, with stones in their hands. The men buy homburg hats with welfare checks. The girls wear skirts that rise to the knees. Tarts, they say, with eggs in their pockets, shell kept by the silk lining from breaking. The men spend the 9-to-5 thinking scripture, tasting the broth of the purchase gained from prayer. Are they out there? a girl asks. Her hand a microcosm of a hand. The bearded men moan as if calling out the name of a son. The men, mouths open, almost sing.