

Runaways
No. 23 "Clothes"

My mother's dead. I don't know what of. But she's dead. And my father, who bossed her around, drank all the time and had other girlfriends, cried a lot and said that life was cruel. And that was it. The other night after my mother's funeral, I went into her dresser drawers and started sorting through her underwear, her socks and her blouses. I could smell her powder, her skin, and her breath. I felt like number one in the world. I mean, she got herself into one of those strange coffins, got lowered into the ground and was never, ever, ever seen on the face of the earth again. It was all so mysterious, and it gave me a kind of medal to show off. Teachers would be kinder. My friends wouldn't say I was bad in sports and I didn't have to worry about pimples, but then it began to wear off, and I'd hold up the clothes and there'd be no body inside of them, and I kept seeing the shape of her arms or the way she'd paint her toenails. And my brain would start screaming. I mean how can a person just completely disappear? I don't understand it.