

Cracks

By

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Second Place

Momma, I know you told me not to venture out into the dark recesses of the world. But as I laid against the boarded window, the sun fell through a pinhead hole in the oldest board.

Was it new or just something I had never noticed before?

As I held my hand up, my wanton skin reflected an orange sun that danced a nutcracker between my flesh and the snowy abyss of our wall. It shone upon me as it illuminated Persephone while she frolicked in a field of daisies, and I found myself yearning to permeate the walls.

But, I remembered the voices boiling over in words as tongues twisted in hate. They hung in the air as you replaced the locks, as our windows went black, and as I forgot what grass smells like.

I knew the dangers. I knew the risks. I remembered my siblings who never returned.

Still, my right foot trembled a step towards the door as I braced myself for the floor to cave in.

Nothing.

Still, I winced as my fingers danced with the door knob, waiting for electricity to fill my veins.

Nothing.

The concrete was as pure and beautiful as freshly fallen snow, as I took my first toddler steps. I flew faster until my breath became labored and my forehead trickled sweat. And then I saw it: one miniscule imperfection that stood between me and heaven. A crack spelled disaster. It split off like a serpent beyond me, winding to unknown parts

My mother's voice burrowed in my brain. The lessons she taught me since I was a child floated in the air.

I knew better than to go forward. There were a million wolves waiting to gobble me up. Each thought vined up my calves, working its way to my chest.

I could run back to bed, bolt the door and hide under the covers. She would never have to know.

There were a million mistakes I would make.

But I could hear them in the distance, children giggling to the clouds. And if I squinted my eyes, the concrete and trees gave way to scenes like the magazines my mom hid in her closet, a million bodies in motion that glistened like diamonds in the summer sun.

Slowly and catlike, I hopped over, one and another, one and another. It was the grace that you gave me, mother. Until, they were everywhere.

Fat cracks. Squiggly cracks. Cracks that lead to China. Cracks deeper than the Mariana Trench. A spider web that entangled me that a million acrobats would never escape.

I knew I should turn back. I knew what one more step would mean.

Run, Mother!

I didn't mean to step on it. I really didn't. Even in my lonely moments, I never wanted this. But, you must realize there was no other way.

I don't know if it's too late, if you are lying at home calling out for me your back twisted and shattered, or if you are grocery shopping blissfully unaware of what I have done.

But, I can't go, not now.

I hear the children playing and the sun shines too brightly on my skin.

THE END.