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Short Changed

A timed exercise

by Janie Reynolds

I would have turned upside down, inside out and back to front - in other words, I would have garroted myself and cheered as the guts and skin and entrails spewed out across the floors and walls, and down the drain, and as my blood spurt 10 metres out in front of me, behind me and to the sides, and upon the ceiling and the window panes consecutively.

I would have cut myself in half, and then half again, infinitely, until the pieces resembled nothing but a stack of Jenga bricks jittering like jelly until they succumbed to the forces of physics.

I would have starved myself until there was no one left who could refuse to eat.

I would have dyed myself orange and grilled myself to a crisp. Lobsterised myself for the catwalk.

I would have donated every organ, joined Al Qaeda, sold my hair, sold my passport and my grandmother, without a second thought.

If only all these and those could have been an option, to bring me closer to the one attribute, the one quality, the one thing that other girls had, which made them what I wanted to be. More like girlfriend material, more beautiful, tougher, faster, leaner, slimmer, more like models, more perfect, more interesting, more mysterious, of better stock, more elegant, cooler, harder to get, more likely to become a popstar, BETTER.

I would have done all this and ten times more and anything else I could have thought of, or that you had asked me to. For that one tiny thing - I would have created Armageddon and worse. As I stood by the other girls, that inch was everything to me. So that I didn't feel short.

So I didn't feel short changed. I wanted to be tall-changed.