

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## Vicissitude

by Mari Syrad Grieves

Some of these things are true and some of them lies:

### **Wood**

To keep order, I've divided my body and yours up into puzzle pieces. They fit together perfectly, but some of the pieces have been lost. We tried to make new ones out of flimsy cardboard, colouring them in with felt tips which then faded and ran out. The plastic coating on the outside has started to come away from the edges and the pieces don't fit properly anymore. I keep pushing them down, but they catch constantly, interrupting the smooth surface, resisting my appeal for order.

### **Blood**

I made a batch of gunpowder from my blood. I let it from my haggard veins and laid it out flat in the sun to dry. Once its surface had darkened to russet brown, and the cracks and texture mapped out the story of my life for the whole sky to see, I began to scrape and chip away at it. This terrific explosive born from my history, my shame, my passion so that it wasn't all for nothing. So that every bitten tongue and swallowed injustice could have its moment in the sun. I loaded the gun and shot myself back up to the stars where I belong.

### **Light**

The future is always softly lit, with fresh flowers, loose cardigans, and festoon lighting. It's always out of focus and the right temperature. There's a feeling that accompanies it, like everything's going to be ok. But if I turn my head quickly, I see the blur of sharp teeth and burning skin. I can't keep it in view but I know it's there, just off stage. I wait and it waits longer. In all my planning, I didn't account for this.

## Glass

A bird was saved from death. It had a mangled wing and a broken leg. The nurses at the vet lied when they said they'd take care of him; 'euthanasia' trembled across their wicked lips. The bird wasn't dead when they threw him in the bin out the back with the broken glass. I rescued him even though he now had a sliver of glass lodged in his cheek and he didn't chirp when I asked him his name, and now I look closer, I don't think he's breathing.

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All of these things are true.