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## Shipwreck

by Mari Syrad Grieves

A fragment of the universe fell down from the sky and with the velocity of its sharp edges, cut me. Not in two, but endlessly, in different ways, at different depths, and for different reasons.

Though I tried, once the fragment landed, I couldn't shake it.

I buried it in the garden but later found it caught amongst the stitching of my dress. I locked it in box and threw away the key but later found it embedded in the corner of my eye. I slipped it in the bag of a stranger and prayed I would not be punished but later found it beneath my blood-red tongue.

I removed my clothes in front of the mirror. My skin, a map of suffering alone night after night, trying to clear a path out of the wilderness. If you were brave enough to touch me, you would feel the raised lines, as though my heart was pumping out its own broken braille, too overwhelmed to speak the words aloud. I can be seen by feel not just by sight. I am more scar than skin at this point.

I don't remember my skin before the fragment fell and I wonder what would've happened if it never had. Or if I had caught the falling piece, and holding it in my bloody hand had said, 'it's not my fault'. Perhaps it would have disintegrated as I dropped it to the damp soil from which I was only just emerging.

My skin must have been soft and pale before, smooth where my mother stroked my outstretched arm, counting the freckles, leaving kisses upon the forearm and the wrist. It must've felt the air kiss it so gently and seen so many carefree days before the dark bloodstained cloth smothered its freedom with shame.

I start counting at one and give up when I reach a thousand. If the scars had been tears, we would all be lost out to sea by now, or shipwrecked. If you look closely, you can still see the wreckage, even feel it, but it's too late, it cannot be recovered.