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## Stricken

by Richard Lewis

The first time I saw her floating by, she was all silken dress blowing in the fickle wind. Her smile could turn cold winter into welcome summer. As if poring sun's rays into the crags and hollows of a grateful earth.

She was loved by all who sailed in her wake and everything seemed shipshape. As if all parts of her rigging were intact, lashed in their rightful position.

She was so far above me, yet somehow, I stole her heart but then put ice in its place. I was just a philandering fool; I never knew that beneath the surface of those wonderous waters, lurked a desperate and ruined soul. As if a storm threatened to shred her sails.

I begged forgiveness but could only watch helplessly, as slowly, imperceptivity, something ate away at the hull of her being. As if stricken and unexpectedly thrown against the cruel rocks of oblivion.

Still I thought I could save her and at times it appeared all was not lost. She seemed to have weathered the impact, yet once holed it was as if nothing could keep out the cold waters of profound grief.

Shattering loss had squeezed her boards and splintered that proud and upright mast. As if, so many stones bore down on her soul, filling the pockets of her existence, until gravity finally took hold.