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Wanting to Remember

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Katherine, still keeping mom squished up against the wall, shouts at you to get your clothes together, and you listen to her because, after all, she is older than you, and because what happened just five minutes ago you know in the pit of you wasn’t right. You spent most of your time in other worlds written for you during your time at your mother’s apartment. Lying on the fold out couch reading lost its thrill after the first month and you got tired of folding, making, re-folding again. But today, you slid noiselessly across the dingy carpet into your mother’s red room. Crimson lipstick, rose blush, scarlet and gold comforter with strings that could be pulled, that you did pull—maybe that’s what made her spark flames and fume. No, while you pulled the golden strings you asked a question you shouldn’t have, that you had known before to steer, swerve away from. But you asked. Something you don’t even remember now. She puffed up, swelled, and then spouted out thick clay at your feet. Her face a blown up red balloon that never popped but you still felt the sting and the heat. “What the fuck did you just say to me?” She cursed you, and threats flew into your face, just as close as hers was. Nose to nose and you thought to yourself this time, she might just do it.

She might hit you. You curled yourself up on the edge waiting for it. But then your red swollen mom was thrown across the room up against the bedroom wall, your sister’s hands gripped the pink shoulders pinned and she yelled don’t you ever touch her again. Did she touch you? Don’t you vaguely remember the brick grip squeeze on your arms? Ten years later your sister will tell you that your Mother had picked you up, and shoved you against her tall dresser. Don’t you remember the golden handles now that stabbed you in the back? Feel how the wood gave you whip lash at the nap of your neck? Didn’t it leave a bruise? It’s like a clip had been cut out where there is nothing. You go from being pinned up against the dresser, to the hallway, looking into the room where your sister has detained the threat, threatening to call the police. Two light bags in your hand, a book in the other, and you’re ready to leave when the sobs and sorrys begin. Why did you buy it? Was it your age that provided too much fairytale hope? She brings you both into a tight wet hug and you feel your sister’s stiff body next to yours, that gives in, yearning, wanting to accept it.