Polaroids at the Old Place

by Emily Smith-Miller

You've got me tracing the bodies on our checker tiled floor, laid in the 1950s. I lay down next to them and you outline me. Caught off guard, I didn't know the roof would leak, I didn't know it would flood. Feathers are settling like snow on ageless skin, the pillow you eviscerated now just a part of the crime scene. I want you next to me, hold my hand while I start going cold. The polaroid snaps an image of blue and gray, a butterfly and a mammoth, my virginity and dignity. This is growing old, this is why I take trips to the beach in black jeans and turtle necks. Can I hang around your life afterwards? Can I still be in your pictures? Do you feel it now? The ebbing of our life together, sharpies running out of ink, abalone cracked by the otter. The water is almost over my shallow head, I always feared I would drown in these tears. All while the camera shutter is going off like a beetle. The walls are collapsing and I'm still now. You walked out through the front door, the way you came in. What were you after? You never said a word. We are bleached bone, we are driftwood, we are all the shades of a troubled sea and you were God. I would have left us too.

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