Wings

by Epiphany Ferrell

We both have our scars. His are from boxing. Mine are from a failure to navigate. He can grow a beard to cover the worst of his. Mine I must learn to shrug off and forget.

He knows I talk to angels, what he would call angels. I don't talk to him. We don't speak the same language. He doesn't know any more than that. He doesn't know, for example, that they answer, these angels, my sisters. He will know more when my wings grow back. Already my shoulders itch. I wonder what he will say when he finally must say something about the white down that even now begins to show its softness on my arms, my back.

He goes to work at the Air Force base. He doesn't fly, not any more. He repairs jets after others have spun them into the sky. I wonder if he misses flying.

He found me in a marsh. I had fallen from the sky and I was hurt, confused. He was hunting geese. I misunderstood him at first, thinking him to be a violent, killing sort of man. He's not, really. He prefers to eat meat he provides for himself, to eat vegetables and fruit and grains he grows himself.

I don't know quite how it was that I came to stay with him all these months. I had nothing to unpack, I came to him with nothing, not a stick of furniture, not a stitch of clothing. At first, he tried so hard to get me to talk to him, to teach me some simple phrases so that I might communicate my needs, then later my wants, and still later my love. He brought me a map once, eager for me to show him where I call home. I couldn't tell him that my home won't be on any of his maps. I took an eraser and tried to make a blank spot on the map, but he didn't understand what I was doing. I remember him kissing my mouth that day with a sort of desperation, as if he could

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suck language, the kinds of words and reassurances he needs so badly to hear, out of it.

We did so well in the beginning. We had so much passion. I could still feel the sky in his skin, and though he didn't know it, he could feel it in mine. But he's grounded now, really and truly grounded. He doesn't feel for me what he did, and I don't get from him what I need.

When I leave, he won't know where I've gone, nor why. I would tell him if I thought he would believe me.