

Obsidian

by Mandy Taggart

Listen to me, at the end of all things, and I will tell you her story.

In her first weeks she was warm and malleable, translucent and perfectly moulded against my body. Her shape was so tenuous that when I laid her in the crib, or if someone else held her, she would quiver briefly, then gradually begin to flow around the new contours until she took on their form. But soon she would begin to shift and fret, and when I lifted her up she would melt, instantly and gratefully, back around me.

The solidification began around seven months. Now, when we were separated, she would writhe and scream, her shape billowing and probing in a frenzied search for some familiar resistance. The next time I pressed her against me, there would be a slight protrusion, or a gap, where we didn't fit together just as smoothly as before.

I began to see wisps of white swirling beneath the crystal skin. For a while, the wisps varied their movement according to her mood. After a bath, or when she had a fever, they would swirl faster. Once, in a tantrum, there was a tornado inside her.

When she learned to walk, the hardening process accelerated. By the time she started school, she had sharp angles that dug into my flesh whenever we tried to find each other's shape. She couldn't keep still. Only with the regressions of illness or sleep could we mould to each other as before, and her new angles would soon reassert themselves.

As years passed, she darkened and became fully opaque. By twelve she was stone hard, a volcanic thing, sucking light into shades of black and dark green. Her angles were knives which she sharpened late into the night. Every so often we came together in desperation, trying to accommodate each other once again: but her edges lacerated my skin, and the pressure of my body would dull the carefully honed keenness of her blades.

At sixteen, she stopped sharpening and turned instead to sanding herself down. She would scream sometimes with the agony of it. When her edges had become hard and utterly smooth, she took a yellow powder and began to polish.

On the day that she finally stood before me, the light attacked me like arrows. I measured us standing face to face, and thought I saw my own distorted reflection looking back. I know now that I only imagined it. I did not mean to shatter her.

So bury me with the shard of black glass still in my heart. At the end of all things, I will walk through raining daggers to get back to her.

