

# Them, Not Us

*by* Tina Barry

We hold fast to the bed's corners, afraid our bodies, these new old bodies, have forgotten how to love in its center. We don't recognize our shapes, amorphous now, or the tattoos that waited patiently to appear: Purple train tracks down the belly. White slashes on a collarbone, the branding of unruly cells removed.

We look into each other's eyes, avoiding what's below. And talk about anyone who isn't us:

The woman whose daughter, well into her twenties and so full of promise, self- imprisoned in her room.

A man who drove a truck through the picnic grounds, families jumping right and left like panicked grasshoppers.

A friend who walked a mob of tiny dogs, entwined in their leashes, angry at each other for being too near, loathing the one that peed too slowly. The dogs stared up at him, a towering hyper-breed, whose face they searched for-- it must have seemed like miles—into the sky.

