

BREAK PRETTY

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I'm trying to figure out how break *pretty* –
how to shatter so that there's nothing left to pick up afterwards,
so depression's shards cut only my own feet.
On the darkest days when the skies go pitch black,
I create entire galaxies on these two palms –
press fingernails down just long enough to break flesh,
leaving behind crescent moon scars.

Every night I fall asleep in the arms of anger.
Like a goddess, she comes in with the moon –
kisses away my silly tears. Turns them to rage.
I thought the company would help me heal,
but her head on my chest feels far too heavy.
And there is no escape in dreams,
where he reappears like a beautiful ghost.
In this unconscious purgatory,
the monsters become my friends.
Maybe they already were.

At four in the morning,
I'm awoken by the memory of lipstick-stained wine glasses
and empty promises exchanged in the backseat of a taxi cab.
I roll over 25 times in bed –
try lying on my stomach but it's too hollow.
I can hear the echo of all the creatures
that have taken shelter inside of me.
Somehow, the butterflies turned back into caterpillars.
Desperate to become beautiful again,
their new cocoons hang from the bones of my ribcage.
They remind me that one cannot be reborn
without first letting the darkness in.
I scream his name into the pillow and it comes out like a prayer.
Dear Father, forgive me for loving recklessly.

The fortune teller burns incense and says that I will live to be an old woman.

I smile and tuck these tarot card hands back into my coat pockets – don't tell her how this premonition scares me more than death. I go home and sage every room in my body, beg the sprits of regret to haunt someone else. They just laugh and root themselves deeper.

I ask the stars how they manage to look so lovely while on fire. There is no reply.

My chest lights up and I count down from 20, let the panic take me. Another crack forms along the edge of my porcelain face. I thought I could figure out how to break *pretty*, but I just *break*.