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Undone

Laurie Hilburn

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Undone

"How can we be whole together if you are not empty in the place that I am to fill?"

- Robert Olen Butler, "Jealous Husband Returns In Form of Parrot"

She kissed me the night of the Halloween party, her skin-tight cat suit meeting my plastic princess tiara in the middle of the dance floor, and she hasn't kissed me since.

It had been unusually hot for an October night, but the basement, so packed with students that the old dorm building ached beneath their weight, was even headier, heavier, sweat licking down the inside of my white tights. The refreshments had long since been served, leaving guests grumpy and loud, rebelling against their calloused throats and the pulsing music, swaying to the beat until it broke them. The party had several casualties—the heel of a shoe, the entrails of a dress, a bloodied fight over the ownership of top hat—but the night still insisted that it was young. Halloween—college—magic—I felt crushed beneath it all.

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She beckoned me with her finger, manicured claws luring in the scratchy fabric of my gloves, and drew from the V of her leotard a flask, a silvery potion brewed just for my split lips and never to be tasted again.

I was all angles then; I was sharp edges, a rough patch, fumbling for ease, to fit as a square into the circular escape. My dress pinched at my back, skin pink from the heat and restraint, and my knees threatened to break, unscrew at their hinges, at each clunk I took in my costume heels. My shoulder jarred against one couple—toes tripped against my hem—

when I met the center, the force of the blasting drums and shrieking guitars locked in my box-shaped self, steadying but trapped, held together and in need of repair. The dancing partners shifted and bounced around me, like I was a party decoration to perform to, and the colors and shimmers and sounds bled together until I thought I would drown in them.

As her elixir burned down my throat, she laced our hands together. I was rusted to the floor, but with ease she pulled me closer. "I can't," I tried to say—can't dance, can't talk, can't move, can't breathe, can't fit into the curves of her body, the smooth circles, the soft lines, graceful serpentine curled into her form until a purr seemed to melt and drip and shudder right off of her skin. My limbs shook in her grasp. "I can't—"

She kissed me, liquid against solid, molten, flowing, until the tarnished edges corroded, dissolved, and were purified. She smiled into the kiss, nose wrinkling against mine, as the rest of me was smoothed and fluttered, untied, undone.

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When she pulled back, I was scarcely tangible; the ethereal echoes of her taste tethered me to her. "Can too," she hummed, and then she tipped back her head to drink from her flask, releasing me from her touch. I could barely hold on—I can barely hold on—I am barely holding on—

Can too, she whispered, from when she kissed me the night of the Halloween party, her magnetism meeting my iron, drawing me forward to where she hasn't kissed me since.

Not yet.