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Beautiful

(3rd Place, The Molloy Common Reading Program Inspired Works Contest)

The mirror was her best friend
Her very best companion
It would tell her how beautiful she was
How envious people must be of her
She would smile and simply deny what she already knew
She was beautiful
Maybe even perfect
Twenty-seven and gorgeous as ever
Of course, she had the plastic surgery to thank for that
But she felt no regret
She took pleasure from the stares that would come her way
Men and women would gape in wonder when she walked by
It gave her a feeling of pure ecstasy
She was addicted
Her beauty gave her power
Until it didn’t
Who is that?
“That isn’t me” she whispered
“Why is she prettier than me?”
She watched the girl, no older than eighteen, strut her way downtown
She walked home
Confused
Angry
Jealous
She had to see her mirror
For comfort
For reassurance
She needed to hear that she was still the most beautiful
Flashing her most exquisite smile she waited for the flood of compliments to arrive
They never did
Something was different about her dear friend
Another lip injection it said
Just a little more Botox
Or maybe a tummy tuck
You’re looking a little pudgy today
She looked at herself closely
Not able to rid her thoughts of the young beauty
With the perfect cheekbones and slightly larger breasts
A little more work couldn’t hurt she thought
But it would
Surgery after surgery
The mirror still wasn’t satisfied
She became obsessive
Comparing herself to every young girl she would walk by on the street
Her insecurities were consuming her
She tried to break free
But would only fall further into the darkness
Drowning in her own self-hatred
She became fearful of the mirror
Pulling away from the friendship they once had
But it called to her
Injecting her mind with its poisonous words
There will always be someone younger it whispered
And more beautiful
And more desirable
She began to understand the words that were being fed to her
Tears ran down her face
She could never compete with the young and the beautiful
No amount of plastic surgery would help her
For the first time in her life
She felt ugly
Ugly and broken
She lay there
They began to surround her
The thoughts
The voices
She couldn’t fight them anymore
She was tired
The insecurities were pounding on her door
And she let them in
All of them
She let them consume her
Consume her completely until she was nothing
Nothing but a beautiful memory