



Surrender

She lay near the edge of the sea, where the sand was still damp from waves that washed over it only an hour before. Her pale skin, illuminated in the moonlight, glowing and almost iridescent, made it impossible not to notice her there, and yet it was unlikely that there would be anyone happening by at that late hour. Seashells scattered around her, still glistening with the wet of the ocean, mirrored the stars twinkling in the blue-black sky above.

Lisbeth came to this place to feel small and weak, as helpless as a grain of sand. She'd remembered feeling that way as a little girl standing at the water's edge so many years ago and she longed for the power of the sea and the vastness of the heavens to show her again how impermanent she was. They did not disappoint.

When first she arrived, the waves licked her toes and grabbed at the sand beneath her feet. They eroded the ground she stood upon and no one expected her to fight them. The ocean is relentlessly strong and deep, dark and heavy -- its power an indisputable truth. Lisbeth's grief felt like the ocean, and yet she was expected to endure its weight, stand against the tide and resist its pull, to carry on as each wave of sadness crashed down on her again and again and again.

It would get easier, they told her. But it did not. The sadness engulfed her and upended her much like a breaker that catches you off guard. Even breathing felt near impossible some days. She was so tired by the weight of it now that she no longer *wanted* to struggle back to her feet. She couldn't remember what it felt like *before...* and she had no desire to.

Lisbeth lay back and floated, letting herself rise and fall, one with the water, at peace with the sadness. She felt weightless and unburdened...light for the first time since losing him. "*Losing him*"...as if she'd sat him down somewhere and walked away...forgotten. The absurdity of it angered her. Forgetting was a comfort she'd never allow herself.

Floating there in the great expanse of the ocean, Lisbeth wondered if he felt like this, floating inside of her. Was it peaceful? Was the rhythm of her heart as comforting as the sound of the waves crashing onto the shore? Was he taken from her, his tiny heart stopped by some fault of nature...or did he chose to leave, simply ceasing to exist for some reason beyond her comprehension? Was that even possible? She imagined the same uncertain questions floating through the minds of others in the weeks to come and she realized that it didn't matter. It was peaceful here and she was tired.

As the moon hung high above the horizon, the grief that was the ocean swallowed her and smoothed away the sharp edges of the pain. She breathed it in and welcomed it, now an inseparable part of her and she of it. And after a time, the sea expelled her lifeless body much as he had been expelled from hers. It placed her gently upon the sand, an iridescent pearl upon the beach where now she lay, her long red hair spread in a tangle around her face. Seashells scattered around her, still glistening with the wet of the ocean, mirrored the stars – beautiful, yet impermanent -- twinkling in the blue-black sky above.