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Horizon

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Mother Superior

Bridget N. Scott-Shupe

I went chasing memories on the banks of Lake Superior, the waters troubled and dangerous despite how serene the vast surface seems. "Mother Superior,"

they call it, which is frighteningly appropriate; so kind by nature while so cruel in action. Sandstone cliffs, brilliant in their orange and reds, standing vigilant over aqua swells; their strength and safety illusions against the certainty of passing time. Grey skies offering little comfort to me watching them from the dreary shipyard docks, lost in my anger, grief and guilt.

I stood here with you once, wind whipping our faces as we drew our coats tightly around us. Even as we silently observed the icebreaker cutting through the frozen lake, the bleak day surrounding us with drizzle and fog, you were happy. The unsettling cracking of the ice filling the air, whispering hints of betrayal through the placid and suffocating quiet. Your soul a perfect mirror of the splintered plane, perpetually distressed despite the seeming calm.

Mother Superior. This is the place of your birth, the force that raised you, the origin of your confused mind. Despite your best efforts, your desires ebbed and flowed like the tide whose steady rhythm of waves echoed the beating of your heart. I wonder if you even recognized your own violence, or, like the lake, were you simply ignorant to the damage that sunk ships down into cold, dark water. I can't forgive you, but nor can I forgive myself for the thought. I shouldn't be here.

As I pick my way through town back to my car I'm flooded by regret, not for myself, but for you. This place you loved but will never see again, these streets you once walked, these shops you once browsed, this feeling of escape you had longed for as you long approached your end. I'll see them, walk them, browse them for you out of a disturbing sense of duty I can't rid myself of. I'll keep you alive; a torture I deserve and a comfort I do not.

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