

Dancing on Knives

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I walked on shards of glass for him
danced on knives to amuse him
cut my tongue out with my own knife
gave my voice to the sea witch
boiled down to sea foam
left saltwater
abandoned the afterlife for him

I brought sweet water from the creek
poured some to his lips
used the rest to wash his feet
at dinner I leaned over
cut his food into tiny squares
told myself I was full

I told myself the legs were worth it
when I walked to the store to buy his meals
cleaned his house on my hands and knees
chased our child through the park

But every morning I found myself at the ocean
visiting my sisters
listening to their siren songs
though I could not sing with them

Every day I waited
for him to notice my bleeding feet
ask me how my sisters were doing
wash our daughter's school uniform
sing me a song or bring me a glass of water
drape a blanket on my shoulders when it got cold
but I grew tired of waiting

so when my sisters gave me a knife
told me I could reverse the curse
I used it

I stabbed his feet
so he would know how it felt
when he asked me to dance for him
sliced off his tongue
sucked the soul from his mouth
then I held my daughter's hand
as we walked back to the ocean