

Tori Perry

## Surrender

Today Harvey Weinstein Surrendered.  
Such an apt word.  
Implies helplessness, defeat, submission.

The Monster is caged.  
At least for now.  
His victims, named and unnamed can know that they were heard.  
His prey.  
His stalked them, assaulted them, shadowed them.  
Made them victims every time they took a job, lurking like a sadistic shadow in the nooks and crannies of their sets. Oozed malevolence into their champagne glasses, distributed films like his crimes, produced nightmares on repeat.

Rose knew. She spoke. Shaved her head in defiance, took hush money to silence his crimes and poured it into the shredder.  
A Difficult Woman is now called a Brave. She is Brave.  
Husk of a person, filled with fire and fervor and the voices of victims.  
Fighting. Fighting. Fighting.  
Warrior.  
She flipped the rock over and showed us the darkness underneath, flipped the light switch on, howled in defiance.  
She refuses to stop. Pushes herself forward, propelled by outrage.  
Holds enablers accountable.

Consent is now held up to study.  
Powerful men are deflated by their crimes, held accountable.  
The predators.  
Used their power and influence to force mouths and hands open.  
Surrender, Surrender.  
Give yourself away.

Know that the unwilling hands you placed on your bodies are now fists, knocking the wind out of your sails.  
The eyes that saw the violation of the use of your money and authority are blazing with triumph.

Your time is coming. Look at the roses outside, delicate, soft, feminine.

Remember that roses have thorns.

Accept your crimes.

Submit.

Surrender.

## Trunk

The day I was sexually harassed was a calm March afternoon.  
Blue skies. 2:30pm. Walmart. Small Town. Texas.  
Cars filled the parking lot.  
Sunglasses on my face, shopping cart full.  
Focused on my task.  
Walked quickly to my car. Opened the trunk. Started to put my bags in.

I heard talking. Two men, a few feet away, in a truck opposite me.  
Saw them out of the corner of my eye. Saw their phones up in selfie mode.  
Finished putting my groceries in the trunk, I pushed my cart ten feet away to the return stall.  
The phones were following me.  
They were filming me.  
Me.  
A thirty-four year old mother of two, in a plain black blouse and black pants.

No way. No way they were filming me.  
Paranoid.

I walked past the car when I heard them.  
Catcalling me. Inviting me to come to their truck.  
Telling me they liked the view when I was putting things in my trunk.  
Laughing at my shock. Biting their lips. Pantomimed with their hands the things that "I needed."  
Filming me the entire time.

I would like to tell you that I pulled my phone out, took a picture of them and walked inside to report them.  
That I called the police and gave them descriptions of my offenders and recited their license plate number.  
That my short red hair transformed into real flames that set fire to the bed of their truck, that they poured  
out and begged my forgiveness. The black truck a burned shell. Their phones turned to tar in the incinerated  
charred remains.

I didn't.  
I got into my car and sat there.  
Stared at the steering wheel.  
Slowly started my car, backed out, and pulled away.  
I did nothing.  
I know that I was lucky. They never got out of the truck. It was daytime. They would have had a easy time  
grabbing all 5'1 of me and getting away.  
My kids were not with me.

My son did not hear the vulgar assault.  
My daughter did not watch her mom cry.

I started shaking ten minutes after it happened.  
I started crying shortly thereafter.  
Called my husband, who cried too.  
We were lucky.  
It could have been worse.

Now I carry a switchblade with me. Occasionally I wrap my fingers around the handle.  
I tuck it into my boots.  
Daring anyone to talk to me.  
Confident.  
I am safer now.  
Still.

There is a video of me somewhere.  
Blue skies. Late afternoon. Black flats. Cart full of plastic bags.  
Just existing.

## Splintered

The first time I had suicidal thoughts, they were not really suicidal.  
It was not an intent to leave.  
I felt as if the floors were tar and that I was sinking into the ground.  
There was no fight to claw my way out of the tar.  
It clung to me, to my clothes.  
Burned the nostrils of people around me, the acrid smell keeping sympathy at bay.  
Glazed eyes. Sleepless.  
I had no fight left.

I was outside last summer. My pale skin enraged at the audacity of the sun.  
Kids running around the spring, laughing. I was struck by how visible my skin was.  
Every freckle, every roll and tuck.  
Remarked that I would be a terrific junkie. I am transparent. My blue veins like a map. A Vitamin D deficiency and a white bikini.  
Stared at the vast expanses of my thighs, struck by all the new and unseen stretch marks. Horrified.  
My husband quietly tells me that those are not stretch marks at all, but veins. I am relieved that my age and childbearing has not scarred me outside.  
My insides have not fared so well.

Depression to me, mind you, this is not the same as being afraid of shadows.  
Shadows are comforting. They are soft darkness that clings to us.  
I am not afraid of the shadows, the dark corners. The soft recesses.

The second time I had suicidal thoughts it was if a sheet came from behind. Wrapped me.  
Hid me.  
I was replaced with a splintered outline.  
Jagged Lines of yellow decorating pale skin like daggers.  
Opened my mouth and locusts filled the room. Curves replaced by hard edges and quills. The pout of my bottom lip withdrawn. Hands full of dust. Blindly moving my feet forward.

Tornado of a girl. It was too loud everywhere. Winds blinded me. I could not feel the comforting hands on my shoulders.  
Questions. Questions. Questions.  
Concern.  
I was nearly away.

I was afraid the outline would hide in my attic, under the bed. Would whisper in my ear at night. Would drip poison into my decorative mug of coffee in the morning. It might be gone. I'm not sure. I think I locked it away somewhere in a hallway. I'm not sure where the hallway is. Did you see where I put my keys?

There they are. Next to my coffee cup.