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Alive

Sierra McWaters
Concordia University - Portland

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Alive

Sierra McWaters

In my hands, I hold five items.

I hold you,

A powerful woman with stars in her eyes
and a song in her heart.

Your future stands right in front of you,

Like the bangs that fall into your line of vision
and tangle between eyelashes with each blink of
wonderment.

You are young—

But old enough to know that life is not like the movies

And you are not Dorothy clicking her heels to go

Home.

I hold the house where it happened.

A place once held so dear,
now littered with cheap pick-up lines and red Solo cups.
The bathroom.

You—pressed against the counter with your eyes staring into your
reflection

as the rhythm takes hold.

Your image is blurry,

But not blurry enough to see those same stars
fade from your retinas.

You taste the bitter liquor climbing back up your throat.

The acid silences you as if to say,

“This is all your fault.”

I hold a weapon.

Though it is not one that can slice or
physically puncture.

It is your trust.

Just like a gun, something that was once used for your own protection
is now pointed straight back at you.

The bullet of betrayal rips through your chest
like a bulldozer tears through the earth,

Leaving you empty—vacant.

The one you trusted with your deepest longings and dreams
has violated you in more ways than one.

You didn't know trust could destroy you like this.

I hold a picture of you as a child.

Small curls frame your face
as sunbeams pour from your teeth.

Your stars shone brightest then.

You are sitting in your father's lap
nestled in his shirt collar
with his 5 o'clock shadow scraping your forehead.

He was the only man you trusted then,

A fact that is only truer now.

You were always taught not to talk to strangers.

But you never knew that those closest
could destroy you more than any outsider.

I hold your gray hair.

Time has passed steadily since that
fateful night—

Your bones creak like the floorboards of
the house where it happened.
You are alone—but you like it that way.
Though your stars have dimmed,
they still flicker on—
Twinkling among the nebulae of your mind.
Your stars will never die,
Reminding you, always, that you are
Alive.