

My Stitches

Category: Scars

written by Lisa Sieczkowski | April 3, 2024

Moving across the ice in jerky strokes, I find myself face down on the rink, the bone of my chin bursting through the skin from inside out. Mrs. Morrissey, the birthday girl's mother, cups her hands under my chin. Blood fills this makeshift vessel and overflows onto the smooth, white ice. I have to leave before it's time for cake because my first stitches take precedence.

*

I have never played floor hockey or any other kind of hockey. My platonic-ish friend invites me to join his intramural team and I do. I run across the shiny gym floor with my stick. All of a sudden, I am on the floor and bleeding from my forehead. I don't know if the gash was caused by my stick or another stick or the floor or something else. My sort of platonic, sort of more-than-platonic friend (we both are dating other people but never say their names out loud) drives me to the local Emergency Department. I am too young, too naïve, too sheepish to realize that I should ask for a plastic surgeon to repair this wound. The provider working in the ED does her best (maybe? hopefully?) but I am left with a jagged scar exploding from my left inner eyebrow, barging into the landscape of my forehead, establishing permanent residence there. My more-than-a-friend friend jokes about how I will be forever disfigured (he's actually not wrong) and I say, "Thanks for making me feel even more awful." The next day a card and a stuffed animal that looks like the lovechild of an elephant and an anteater are waiting for me in the mailroom of my dorm. They are not from my boyfriend.

*

Clawing my way toward consciousness, forcibly registering each breath and thought, I push through the haze of anesthesia. I am vaguely aware that I am making the others uncomfortable. I lift my hospital gown to show off my new incisions, but their locations in my lower abdomen provoke awkward chuckles and quick moves to cover me up. I am grown but acting like a child. They don't hurt yet, those slices through my skin and fascia and muscle, but they will. I choose my bikinis wisely from this day forward: the ones that are higher waisted will cover most of my small laparoscopic scars.

Lisa Sieczkowski

Omaha, Nebraska