

Mental Imagery by Lindsey Froling

You remember the cold sweat waking you up at night. You were ten. Your sheets were soaked. You had to change them before going back to sleep. You remember how you said you'd never smoke, but you lit that cigarette anyways. You remember being scared to go to school, because he was your science teacher. He often gave you sideways glances as he passed your desk. You remember the prick of the tattoo needle that forever marked your skin. You remember the look on your mother's face when you walked into the house with a tattoo. You remember his hands on your body. You were small and it was unpleasant. You let him touch you anyways. You remember falling off your bike over and over again, and getting back on. The smell of his cologne still lingers in your memory. You remember the first time you drove a car. Your mother had a Camaro. You remember the week you lived out of the Camaro. You remember the first time you watched blood trickle down your arm. The razor blade was from an X-Acto knife. You remember the nightmares that haunted you for years. You remember the month you were better. You remember how proud your mother was. You remember the sound of a rattling Xanyx in an orange pill bottle with your mother's name on it. You remember the sting of your mother's slap when she found the empty orange bottle. You remember the smell of roses in the springtime. You remember crying when your grandma cut the roses. You remember burying the roses when they died. You remember your fingertips grazing the barrel of a gun. The gun felt cold and heavy in your hand. You remember seeing your grandma in a casket. You weren't sad, but you cried anyways. You remember firing the gun. You missed. You remember having to tell your mother how that hole got in the wall, and why the neighbors called the cops. You remember his pudgy fingers, tracing your undeveloped breasts. You remember the stares you got in public places.

Looking in the mirror, you realize you became everything you said you wouldn't. You remember, when what you want is to forget.