

Aphrodite

I found her on a beach in mid-April. It was rolling into evening, and a solitary star gleamed in a sky that was just bruising into that gully between day and night. The street lamps on the promenade were sputtering on, choking in the white-noise, a chill prickled at the hairs on my arms, and I watched as she emerged from the water like a swan, or the blooming of some evening flower, dying sunlight shining from her skin like it had come all this way just to make her glow. It was as though she had sprung from the sea-foam, fully-formed. There was a furze of sand coating my hands which turned sodden as she drew me to my feet. I followed her home, palm to palm and gormless with awe, shoes abandoned on the dune. When the night was over, she gave me a scallop shell filled with saltwater, a baptism from a time before God, and we went back to the beach, last night's shoes long gone with the tide. She ate a yellow apple, the kind that starts wars, and we watched that same star sink into the ocean before she left. The last one to wink out in the first streaks of morning.

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