

Beached

Written by Nelly Miles, 42

Fashioned by the moods of the tide
The beach is moulded by the motions of the water
Carelessly it tumbles into the ocean, without resistance
Bit by bit, delicately, gradually
Falling away into the abyss

Like a soft wave caressing the shoreline
He swept her in, he shaped her

Only a focussed observer would notice a change
Skilful weather watchers might have told her a storm was brewing
She wouldn't have listened
Even when the season changed
Even when the waves built in momentum
Luminous days of cloudless summer skies
Swiftly becoming cold, dark, heavy grey
She didn't believe the forecast

When the storm comes to the beach
The waters, black and angry,
Dumping the pitiless stinging brine
Smacking down onto a helpless shore, relentless and furious
Does the sand dare to resist? No matter
It's no match for the might of the sea
It will be dragged
Cleaved apart, fragmented chasms sliced into the shore
Then spat out

She sits on the beach, her hands pushing into the sand
The grains rough, strangely soothing
Her thumb

She grabs a handful of sand
Rubs the swollen, bulbous joint
Sore where it was bent, bent back
Beyond its natural limit
On the other end, her deformed pinky
Sprained and blue

The car keys were in her grasp, a means for escape
Her fingers curled around them

His hand around hers
Trapping the keys in her fist
Pushing them into the flesh of her palm, cutting in

She had to yield
She had to go where the waves took her

She digs the disfigured hand into the sand
Gritty grains push up under her fingernails

Despite all the will of the sea
And the forbidding power of the irascible ocean
The tiny grains of sand did prevail
The beach restored, unbeaten

You did not – you could not – wash her away



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