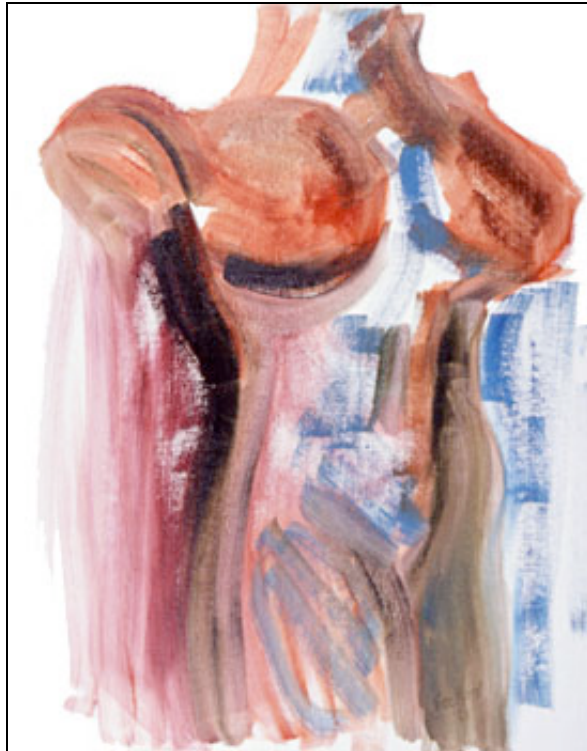


[STORY]

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As the complexity of an organism rises, its silicon content decreases. The ratio of silicon to carbon is 250:1 in the earth's crust, 15:1 in humus soil, 1:1 in plankton, 1:100 in ferns, and 1:5000 in mammals.

The Story of Her Breasts

by
Kirsten Menger-Anderson

Thirty days after Sheila paid for her implants, she had troubles with her right breast. She was twenty-one, a senior in college, and one of her nipples pointed sideways and down, toward her crotch. She'd gone from an A-cup to a D, and now she'd begun to deflate.

The surprising thing was, nothing hurt. She didn't recognize the problem till she brushed her teeth, and she only noticed because the neckline of her

nightshirt hung too low on one side. Even then, she didn't realize that the breast caused the trouble, though it didn't take much longer to figure out. She squeezed a fistful of mis-aligned flesh, still oddly heavy and foreign even when properly hung. Perhaps she could sculpt her breast, like clay, into a more pleasing shape. Doctor Lindsey had massaged it into its previous form, after all. He'd told her that silicone gel and breast tissue had the same weight and feel. Not even he could tell real breasts from augmented ones. The implant, however, did not respond to Sheila's fingers.

Her damaged breast hung in a limp fold an inch and a quarter below its counterpart. She measured three times, right before medieval lit. The day's topic was *Beowulf*, which she hadn't yet read. It was Indian summer in New York, warm but not humid. The day before, hundreds of prisoners had seized control of Attica, a maximum-security prison in western New York, and that was all anyone talked about.

She set aside the red tube top she'd planned to wear. Professor Stanton loved red, or at least he always noted it in the texts the class discussed. Kristin, Sheila's roommate told her that she only dreamed of the professor because of unresolved issues with her dad. When Sheila was six, her father left home, left Mississippi altogether, and she hadn't seen him since. Kristin, who was studying psychology (which she professed to love, though she rarely made it to her eight o'clock class), explained that Sheila's new breasts were a stand in for her dad, a type of Freudian thing, she thought.

Six pairs of shoes, two pasta-sauce crusted plates, and a cardboard box containing all of Sheila's old bras cluttered the small apartment. She'd written the lyrics to "LA Woman" on one side of the brown flap lid the night before, her handwriting barely legible after two parties and a half bottle of wine, which she'd shared with Kristin. The evening's events still floated foggy in her memory. Had she fallen? Been punched? Passionately embraced?

She stood in front of the mirror: short white skirt and tennis shoes, hair tied back with a scarf, eye-liner, lip-liner, lipstick—all before ten in the morning—checking to see if the damaged breast showed. She'd slipped on two tank tops and a white turtleneck sweater. So long as she didn't fold her arms, she looked okay. Women who developed breasts on their own didn't understand how much time it took to adjust to the new weight of a chest. Or that a breast could suddenly change its shape. Sheila had been warned by her doctor. She wasn't afraid, only irritated that her chest was one of the ones that needed adjustment.

She arrived at class a few minutes late. Professor Stanton, in a plaid jacket and olive trousers that might have fit him better a few years ago, had already written the day's lecture topics on the blackboard. The medieval lit class had only a dozen students, most bent studiously over lined notebooks, as Sheila took an empty seat in the back of the classroom. She had no friends in the class, though since the augmentation, she'd struck up a few casual conversations and answered questions about whether or not the procedure hurt. The other students knew her name now, and at least one of the girl--a blonde who wore polyester and thigh-high boots to class--hated her. Usually, the blonde's judgmental stare made Sheila feel feminine, envied, sexy. Today, Sheila determined that the stares identified only the new shape of her right breast.

Professor Stanton began the lecture with the Attica riots. Another prison guard had been killed, and the prisoners still controlled the facility. He didn't stumble as he spoke, never paused to search for a word, never stopped to

take a question. When he read passages aloud, he unfolded rectangular spectacles, which he otherwise kept tucked in his shirt pocket. "These riots are not about the prisoners," Professor Stanton said, "but us. Our society and how we treat each other. Treat a man like an animal, and he will respond like one."

Professor Stanton had a way of finding themes in everything, as he might in a novel, with characters, plot, and resolution. Sheila loved this about him. He was old, maybe fifty, but radical, brilliant, cosmopolitan. When she imagined sleeping with him, he lay beside her, knowing what the college boys did not, that breasts were more erotic observed than touched. Once, just after the surgery, she dreamed that she bared her chest and lured him to her bed, where he whispered the hidden meaning of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to her cleavage.

"Treat a man with no respect, and he is no longer a man," Professor Stanton said and, after a while, Sheila realized that he'd moved onto *Beowulf*. If he noticed her new form, he never reacted to it, either before or after the right breast deflation. She had to wear sweaters for a full week before she could schedule a new appointment, so Professor Stanton had plenty of opportunity to observe her chest in all its states. He did ask her to stay after class the day of the *Beowulf* lecture, though, her name from his lips coursing through her like a shot of whiskey.

He said that she needed to participate more often and that she shouldn't be afraid to speak up. He said that women needed to find their voice, and that education was wasted on the silent. He reminded her that class participation was part of her grade, and she promised to try harder. She smiled, nodded. The truth was that she preferred to spend nights out with Kristin, and weekends, so long as the weather was warm, at the beach. How good she felt in a swimsuit! Weekdays, she only woke up before ten on days that she had class.

Sheila didn't admit that she hadn't read the book, or that she'd enrolled in both his classes just to watch him. She took his Critical Theory seminar on Tuesdays and Thursdays, where she filled notebooks with rough sketches of his face.

She might have stayed longer to talk, but she worried that her deformed breast showed. The sweater was hot and she was sweating. And now that her skin was moist, she could feel the damaged breast, like a melting tub of butter on her chest.

• • •

Sheila married a lawyer a year later. His name was Stanley Talbot, and he, too, was much older than she. He had a thick beard and wore torn jackets to court, just to get a rise from the suits, he said. She met him at a bar, Sheila certain that he noticed her breasts from across the room. He commented on them later that night as she lay beside him on his waterbed. You have the most beautiful knockers, he said.

"Silicone technology," she laughed. Her breasts had personality, pizzazz. When she laughed, they, too, bounced with mirth. Since Doctor Lindsey had replaced her leaking implant, she'd had no further troubles, and she now carried her D like a natural. Sometimes, she even lied about her size, telling new friends-- Stanley's friends mostly--that in High School she'd required a specially tailored twirling uniform, or that she'd gone straight from an

undershirt to a C-cup—all harmless untruths that spiraled in her imagination, bringing new boyfriends, confidence, and excitement to her past.

She enjoyed choosing a wedding dress, opting for a strapless gown she could never have filled just over a year before. She asked her mother to give her away, the one unusual twist in an otherwise traditional ceremony. Her mother wore falsies.

“Just so they know we’re related,” she said, stuffing the pads beneath her bra.

“Have you considered surgery?” Sheila asked.

“At my age?” her mother laughed. She’d done her hair for the occasion, piling it grandly above her half-moon pearl earrings, which matched her necklace and belt. Sheila worried about her mother. She’d never find another man in Inverness, population just a thousand. As far as Sheila knew, her mother had not had sex in over fifteen years. “Women my age don’t need breasts,” her mother said.

Sheila smiled, deciding then to buy her mother a pair. Two plastic sacks of silicone, heavier than water and just as harmless. Doctor Lindsey said that they lasted forever. If a mother wanted to, she could will them to her children. Doctor Lindsey had a breast-shaped fountain outside his offices. Water spilled out of the nipple, which had been fashioned from copper. Business was good.

Sheila never got her mother a new pair of breasts. The pregnancy her wide-skirted wedding dress concealed stole most of her energy for the next six months, and the baby girl grabbed all that remained from the moment she first screamed. Sheila and Stanley named their daughter Evany.

Sheila’s breasts grew even larger with pregnancy. So large that her back hurt, and she had to buy new bras and tee shirts. But little Evany didn’t mind the size, her small, pink lips encircling first the right and, later, the left nipple. Sheila could hardly feel the suckling. She’d lost most of the sensation in that skin. She wondered how her cushions of flesh would affect her daughter. How, growing up, the girl might gravitate toward swimming instead of track and field. She’d like bagpipes, balloons, over-stuffed pillows, bean-bag chairs. Things that enveloped her. Warmth. Contact. If only her mother had offered Sheila so grand a breast! If only Sheila had rested her head against soft flesh. She had just the memory of her mother’s bony chest, deep inside her, where she was certain that her father’s face lived as well, a memory that made her dislike certain men for no apparent reason.

Now that she was no longer in school, Sheila read the books she’d been assigned: *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*, *Book of the Duchess*, *Divine Comedy*. The texts were no easier to read, the language struggling to reveal its meaning to her, but days alone with the child needed filling. The television kept the baby awake, so she rarely watched the sitcoms, and Stanley never returned before eight or nine. He’d left corporate law, where he’d made a comfortable fortune, to embrace ideals. Defending the American way, he called it. Now he worked pro bono for the Attica Brothers’ Legal Defense, where he fought for justice for the inmates who’d been abused during and after the Attica uprising. He alone still spoke of the prison riots, of the injustice that not a single law enforcement officer had been charged. Sheila thought of Attica only as the time when her breast had deflated, though she listened to her gray-haired husband’s stories and agreed that prisoners had

rights.

"Forty-three dead," Stanley would say. "The National Guard fired indiscriminately at the prisoners for *twelve* minutes. Killed their own men. And then blamed the inmates!"

Sheila liked the passion in his words. He would find the truth and see justice done. Most people felt the matter resolved; the inmates had brought the wrath of the law upon themselves. But when Stanley spoke of it, the matter seemed simple and clear. How could anyone deny that the system wasn't working?

Their flat, carpeted wall-to-wall in cream-colored plush, had a wet bar that Sheila used as a nursing station while Stanley lit a joint or poured himself a glass of white wine. The furniture, aside from the two beaded lamps she had saved from her college days, belonged to Stanley—all dark wood pieces that felt stuffy and old, left over from his conservative corporate days, the days before he stopped shaving, started grooving, and, of course, met her.

Now and then, while Stanley worked, Sheila considered visiting her old advisor. NYU was just a subway ride away. She could even take a cab. She imagined discussing the texts she'd scarcely glanced at before each class. Perhaps she could even invite Professor Stanton over for dinner. He'd like her husband. They both had passions, intelligence, a dignified age. She invited her other friends, Kristin mainly, only when her husband was at work. Lunchtime, she called it, for cocktails and gossip before her friend returned to the doctor's office, where she filed paperwork or scheduled appointments.

Sheila and Kristin were drinking vodka tonics at one in the afternoon when Sheila admitted that she was pregnant again.

"Are you sure?" Kristin said. She wore a loose skirt and platform shoes, and she would soon return to work intoxicated.

Sheila nodded. Yet again, her breasts had grown, and her nipples extended dark and hard. Each could feed a thousand starving children. She was a goddess, the mother of mothers, the Norse goddess Freya, all beauty, and harvest, and fertility. "I threw up this morning," she said.

She told her husband the news later that night, and together they toasted with champagne. Stanley decided that they should take a vacation before the child was born, and Sheila agreed, knowing even as she nodded that they would never find the time to leave New York.

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After the children started school, Sheila looked for part-time work. Her first job, typing forms for a legal office Stanley knew, provided a nice salary as well as adult company. She loved dressing and leaving for work. She wore her hair up in a barrette, and matched colored flats to colored handbags to the color of her belt. Business suits flattered her, and shoulder pads gave her command. Her breasts looked good under thin, white blouses. She bought a half-dozen cream-colored bras and wore silver and turquoise necklaces that hung nicely just above the point where her cleavage began. She worked with four other women, and they often ate lunch together, sharing a single dessert. Of the girls, Sheila had the largest chest, and she couldn't help feeling pleasure when the partners (all men) noticed her—a middle aged woman with two kids—and called her sexy.

She enjoyed the tap of keys, the click of the carriage return, and the hum of small electric motors. But the motion aggravated a discomfort in her fingers, a pain in the joints of her hands and wrists. Her physician diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis. Common among women, he told her, primarily older ones. At her age, the disease was unusual, but not unheard of. Was she tired? Did she sometimes lose her appetite? Even children, on occasion, could contract the disease.

Kristin got Sheila a job selling vitamins by phone, sometimes door to door. The work was home-based, but the two often met for coffee in the afternoon where they discussed the clients (awful, all of them) the regional manager (who had a drinking problem), and the other sales people (who never showered). Kristin had cut her hair short and frosted the ends. She and her daughter shared a wardrobe, she said. Jordache jeans, turtle necks, pin-striped button-down blouses. How easy it was to stay current that way. Kristin was seeing a Wall Street investor. She shared financial advice over empty packets of artificial sweetener.

Sheila nodded, aware that she and Evany wore different sizes. Her daughter's shirts would never fit Sheila, even the bulky cowl-neck sweaters. If the girl did not wear her padded training bra, she could easily be mistaken for her brother. How early was too early for surgery? What would be a good cup-size for a girl in junior high?

Evany should not have to endure gym class, the locker room awash with girls—womanly girls who wore clasping bras while she changed quickly behind her locker door. She should not have to bear the brunt of the jokes: what's a boy doing in the locker room? Ew! A boy! Sheila saw herself in her daughter. We'll take care of it, she promised, and Evany shrugged, dismissive.

When Evany turned eighteen, Sheila paid for her daughter's breast augmentation surgery. She and Evany had discussed the procedure for years, and Stanley had given his blessing. His forehead bare beneath retreating hairline, he still left for his office each morning, though he often spoke of retiring. He and his colleagues had filed a federal civil rights lawsuit on behalf of the Attica inmates. The state had brutalized the prisoners and should pay them \$2.8 billion, he explained. He still spoke of the matter often, though the case had remained unresolved for nearly twenty years.

"Eighteen's old enough," Sheila said as she applied a light pink nail polish. She'd cut her hair short like Kristin's and wore dangling earrings that knocked against her chin when she leaned forward. The rheumatoid arthritis had moved from her hands to her neck and shoulders and down to her hips, knees, and ankles. Stanley helped her fasten necklaces now, and she avoided lifting heavy things like water-filled teapots or mopping buckets.

"I'm old enough," Evany confirmed. She had grown tall and thin, and she played volleyball, an option Sheila had never considered for her. She would start NYU next fall, live in the dorms. With new breasts, she would find a nice boyfriend. She would learn, just as Sheila had, to love her body. What more could a mother give her daughter? She and Evany discussed cup size on the cab ride over to Doctor Lindsey's office.

"B, I think," Evany said.

"The people who know you now are just now people. When you go off to college, no one will realize." Sheila knew her daughter worried that her new

breasts would be a stigma if considered false, a concern that ultimately led the calculating girl to choose a C over a D-cup at Doctor Lindsey's office.

The doctor's clinic now occupied a full six floors and an administrative suite in the building across Broadway. He had twenty-six doctors on staff, but he met Sheila at the door. He remembered her, he said.

He remarked that Sheila looked well, joked with Evany, asked about her boyfriends, the prom, her plans for the summer. He had aged since the last time Sheila had seen him, but he'd gotten a facelift, or at least the skin of his face seemed tighter than she remembered. He'd moved the breast fountain from outside to the lobby, where he said the elements didn't harm it.

The day Doctor Lindsey inserted the tissue expander in Evany's chest, twelve separate wildfires blazed through Yellowstone Park, the worst fires in seventeen years. Experts said that the flames blackened the mountains, but that no permanent harm was done. Sheila waited in the lobby beside the fountain and read the newspaper. Falling water reminded her of rain, the outside humidity.

Afterwards, she and Evany celebrated with ice cream Sundaes. "How does it feel?" Sheila asked.

"I feel like a woman," Evany said.

• • •

Evany had just started her second year at NYU and her brother had gone off to Berkeley when CBS did a TV special on silicone breast implants. Sheila was working on her Christmas lists, which she archived each year and later reviewed to ensure that she never bought the same gift twice or missed mailing a holiday card. She'd grown her hair out in a short bob and wore a terrycloth leisure suit, jacket half-zipped (fully closed, the cloth pulled too tight across the chest) with matching drawstring trousers. She'd turned the television on, her companion when Stanley worked late. It seemed the Attica case would at last go to trial, which meant many late nights and worked weekends.

"Face to Face" with Connie Chung filled the room with a cool, screen glow as the program guests, all women with silicone implants, began speaking of symptoms. One admitted to swollen glands, fevers, chills, sweats, and sore throats. Another said that she could no longer walk, that her joints were swollen and sore, that she'd lost small handfuls of hair. A third sat in a wheelchair and explained that it had started as nothing more than a pain in her fingers. With them was a doctor, who spoke of the immune response system and abnormal antibodies. He'd examined these women and found silicon in the thyroid gland, the spleen, the liver. Every part of the body.

Sheila raised an involuntary hand to her chest, remembered, suddenly, the scars at the crease of her breasts. She had an hourglass figure, firm and toned. Her chest did not sag or stretch. Last time she went to the beach, she'd wore a string bikini. All mine, she said, if anyone asked. Until this moment, she believed that her breasts had aged well, better than natural ones.

She reached for the telephone, dialed her daughter. For most emergencies, she called her husband, but today, she thought only of her daughter with the C-cup breasts.

"Do you have the TV on?" she asked.

Evany laughed. "I don't have one, Mom."

Her daughter's voice reassured her. Sheila curled the phone cord around her fingers. She and Stanley had at last purchased furniture, and she leaned back against the black leather skin of their new couch. Scattered across the floor, her index cards, pens, and lined notepaper seemed irrelevant, unimportant. "They're saying the implants react with the body, that silicone damages connective tissue."

"It's just like carbon." Evany was a chemistry major. She studied hard, had lunch with her professors, led freshmen labs that paid her tuition. She said that silicon was the second most abundant element on Earth. "We all have it inside us anyway."

Sheila bent her fingers, forming and releasing a loose fist. She'd grown used to the pain in her joints. "I'm going to talk to Doctor Lindsey," she said.

"It's just TV." Evany laughed, and Sheila agreed because her daughter sounded so confident. It was foolish to be alarmed, to have involved Evany. Sheila asked her instead about classes. Did Professor Stanton still teach in the English department? She admitted that she used to fantasize about him. That he'd been the sexiest man on faculty.

"I haven't thought of him in years," she said, though she had a clear image now of the back of his classroom, she in three layers of clothing over a leaking breast implant.

Evany said she didn't know if he still taught. She would ask around, report back. "Bye, mom," she said.

Sheila hung up, dialed another number. She had to try dozens of times before she got through to Doctor Lindsey's clinic. The doctor did not take her call.

Three days later, she received a form letter from his office. There's no proven danger, it said, though the lifetime of silicone implant was likely lower than originally thought. The clinic offered replacement surgery at half price for the next six months. The letter did not mention the CBS broadcast by name, but it implied that certain parties were spreading unfounded rumor, and that women should not be afraid to take control of their bodies. It was a woman's right, the letter said. Women should be who they wanted to be.

Sheila discussed the matter with her husband. Should she get the implants removed? She'd worn the silicone breasts for half her life. They belonged to her. She could not imagine ripping them out. Yet what if she, like the women on TV, never walked again?

"Don't be rash," Stanley said. His skin had softened, but the short hairs that showed where his shirt collar opened had turned wiry and hard. He didn't want her to get surgery, she decided. His wife with the beautiful figure. "Thousands of women are fine, right?"

• • •

Sheila's breasts were wrapped in an orange sports bra the day the Food and Drug Administration banned silicone-filled breast implants. The commissioner of the FDA announced that the implants had not been proven safe and

therefore should not be placed inside a woman's body.

"The good news is that there are plenty of women to study," the television announcer said. "Over two million women have had the procedure over the past thirty years." The Mayo Clinic and Harvard were conducting research, comparing the incidence of connective tissue disease in women with breast augmentations to that in women who'd had breast reductions. Dow Corning, the major manufacturer of the silicone-filled sacs, was pouring money into new studies. The announcer warned women not to panic. No one was claiming that the implants were unsafe.

Sheila was doing aerobics, one arm folded under her chest for added support. For the past months, ever since the Connie Chung broadcast, her breasts had felt heavy, almost as they had when she'd first received the implants. Could they really attack her body? Had her arthritis worsened? Uncertainty had weight. She could sense the implants against the muscles in her chest. They moved beneath her fingers, like egg yolks in the sizzling whites of a frying egg.

She turned off the TV, called Evany.

"Even if there is a correlation," Evany said through the telephone—always the phone, though she lived just miles away—"it would take years to affect me. I only just got them, and I love them! Oh! And Professor Stanton still teaches." Her roommate had him for a class, she said, the students called him the 'old coot.'

"Perhaps there is no correlation," Sheila said. Doctor Lindsey's clinic had sent her a half-dozen letters to that effect. The most recent offered to replace silicone with saline implants, and a small note at the bottom reiterated a common theme in each communication: that any legal complaints should be against the *manufacturer*.

Her fingers found her chest, rubbing gentle, loving circles. Someone in Cincinnati was filing a class action suit. There was a general call to women who'd received implants. Sheila read about the case in the paper, called Stanley at work.

"Class actions are tricky," he said. "I'm still waiting to hear what happens with Attica." The prison riot case had been thrown to a lower court, and the state denied that it was at fault. No excessive force or violence was used during the riots, they said, though dozens of witnesses testified otherwise.

"What if--" Sheila asked him. A woman in Texas had just been awarded twenty million dollars in punitive damages. Another, in San Francisco, received over seven. The cases opened and closed like snapping mousetraps.

"You're better off filing charges yourself," Stanley said. He knew several lawyers involved in similar suits, and several more who would be good, if she was sure.

Sheila felt the uncomfortable weight of her half-filled coffee cup. "Please ask them," she said.

• • •

Her lawyer, a white-haired, Harvard man with three ex-wives, insisted that Sheila have her implants removed; he wouldn't represent her otherwise. "No jury would be sympathetic," he said.

Sheila hadn't realized until then that she'd made a decision.

She called Kristin, who'd moved out to Colorado, and asked her advice. "Are you crazy?" her friend said. "Get them out."

She called Evany, who had a physics exam the next day and could not talk long, but said, "*The New England Journal of Medicine* just published a study that found no evidence connecting implants to other complications." Sheila jotted down the name of the magazine. She wanted to believe her daughter, but doubts had created an urgency inside her. She needed to know the truth.

She called Stanley, who told her that they didn't need the trial money, and she should only go through with it if she really believed in what she was doing. He'd support her, he said, whatever her decision. He didn't sound enthusiastic. When she asked, he explained that inmates waited years for justice—that was all, he was sorry, he was having a bad day.

She spoke to her physician, who examined her and said that she ought to have surgery on her knee—a replacement, the existing joint had been badly damaged by her arthritis. Yes, her symptoms had worsened, the physician said. Was she having trouble breathing at night?

She stood shirtless in front of the mirror cupping her breasts in her hands, feeling both their weight and the pain in her joints. How would she look without her implants? Who would she be? How would her clothing fit? Her posture change? Her confidence? She had become a 32D. This was how she knew herself. She didn't even have photos of herself flat-chested.

She made an appointment at Doctor Lindsey's clinic. Doctor Lindsey himself didn't have time to perform the surgery. The nurse told Sheila that he rarely worked in the clinic anymore, pretty much retired at fifty-five.

"How nice for him," Sheila said. She asked if she could see her implants after the surgery, if the doctor could save them until she woke up. The nurse said she'd ask, told Sheila that she would come to in the recovery area, a small rectangular room with striped wallpaper and lacy curtains.

Sheila tried to smile. Her lawyer had assured her that women felt better afterwards, relieved. He represented two other silicone victims; he knew.

She nodded when the doctor explained that in a few minutes, the drip anesthesia would take effect. She drifted to sleep with the thought that she should run her fingers over her breasts one more time.

When she awoke, still groggy, she had acres of empty, powerless skin. She couldn't see it, but she knew. *Women my age don't need breasts*, she thought, though the words belonged to her mother—her flat-chested mother who had died alone, years ago.

"Did they leak?" she asked the doctor, a young man who seemed too young to have finished medical school, too young to be working on her. He brought just one implant for her, the fist-sized sack grown yellow with age.

"Does it look like it?" He was busy, had another patient scheduled. She should return for a follow-up next week.

"That thing could have killed me."

"There's no evidence about that." The doctor shook his head. "No one's saying that. The Mayo clinic just released their findings--"

"How do you explain the settlements?" Sheila wondered if her symptoms would cease, if she would begin to gain strength in her fingers, if she'd feel less tired and sore. Was that evidence? Was that worth this loss?

The doctor shrugged, wished her luck, said that she could always elect to have reconstructive surgery, later. Insurance might even pay.

She walked alone into the clinic lobby. Water spurted from Doctor Lindsey's rounded fountain. How much gel had seeped into her tissue? What had it done? Did it do? Could still do? Had her breasts made her sick? Had she poisoned her daughter? These were the weights she now carried, close to her heart, where her silicone breasts once sat.

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About the author: Kirsten Menger-Anderson currently lives in Barcelona, Spain. Her work has appeared in the *Maryland Review* and the *Southwest Review*.

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