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The Mask

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The Mask

By: Helen Shullaw

Ann entered the solitude of her room, slowly shutting the door behind her. Sitting on her bed, she glanced around the room, relieved to be back home in her haven. The four walls surrounded her, embracing her. Here she was safe. She walked across the room and stood before her dresser. There she began to strip off the mask.

Off came the smile, by now worn and faded from use. She placed it on the dresser-top, glad to be freed of this ever-present stranger. Next came her eyes, falsely lit with hope. Finally, the tears could flow. Before her lay her ears, full of lies and endless chatter. At last she was able to listen to the voice of her soul.

Once again, Ann was herself, stripped of all facade. Sprawled across the bed, she looked upward to the ceiling, searching for the meaning in the creviced tiles above. The ceiling held no answers.

She walked in a daze-like trance to the bathroom and here she met her fate. The medicine that cures became the poison that kills.

And the screaming sirens of the ambulance on the street below paid tribute to a girl who never was.