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Emotional Strongholds

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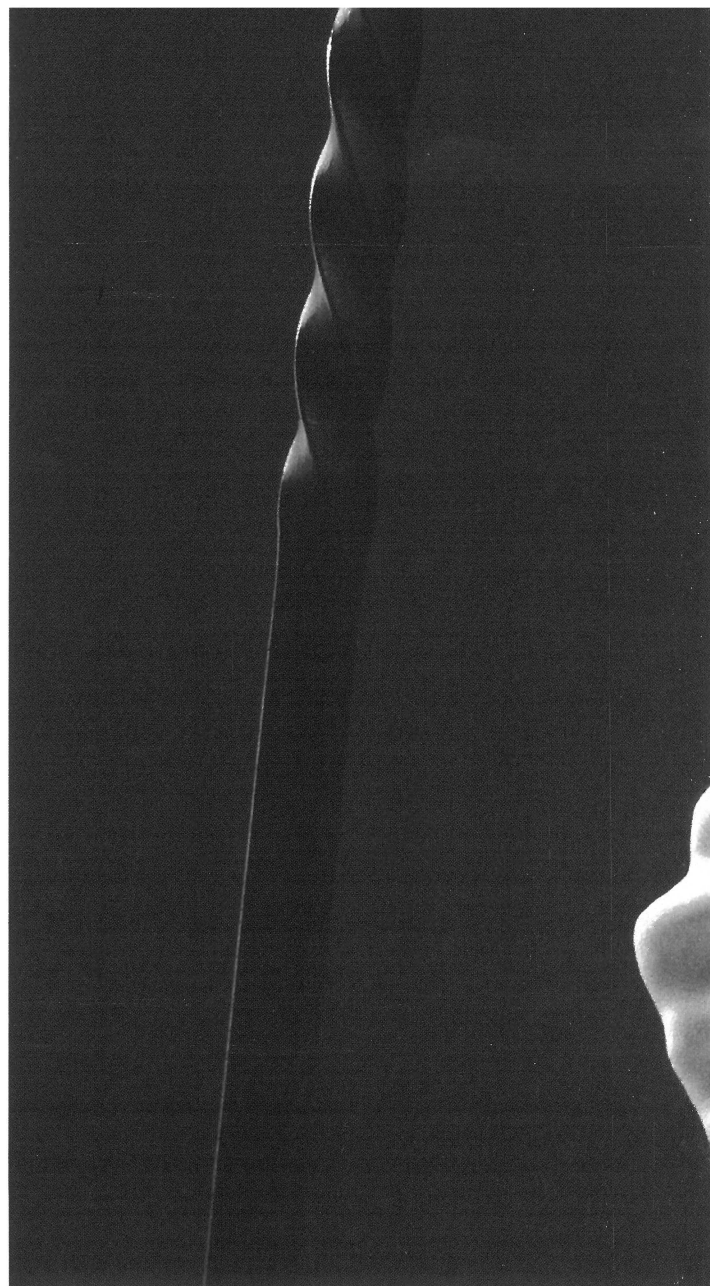
A Mysterious Place

Jade Young

I woke with a pounding headache and heaviness in my chest. As soon as I opened my eyes, I saw that I was in a small white room with padded walls, empty, except for a light bulb that dangled in the center of the ceiling. I walked towards a tiny space where the padding was missing. When I came close, I saw a small door. I opened it and took a step, and suddenly I fell straight down. It felt as if I were falling for a lifetime but when I hit ground and looked up, I saw the door was only ten feet above me.

This new room looked more like a hallway: long and narrow and slightly dim. Unclothed mannequins, resembling people who had not eaten for days, surrounded me. Each face was covered in makeup, and each body was covered in scars. I started running. I didn't know where I was or where to go, but I knew one thing: I needed to get out of there.

I ran for hours; my calves and lungs were on fire. I stopped, panting, to look around. But my surroundings had not changed, and I had not made progress.



Hopeless, I dropped to my knees. I sat, crouched, and cradled my head. It was then I heard a sound, as if someone had switched on a light.

I looked up, and everything around me had changed. A single bright light glared, and I squinted. There, in the open space, a tall slender man lurked, dressed in black jeans and a black hoodie that covered his face. I stood frozen as he slowly walked toward me, his face barely coming into the light. My stomach dropped; time froze and flew by at



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the same time. Deep terror spread through my body, and I tried to swallow my screams.

He reached out his arms. His hands barely grazed my sides when I started screaming and trembling.

He disappeared.

I tried to calm myself: I was safe.

I wiped my tears and looked up. I was standing in front of a mirror, and my reflection showed someone someone stood behind me.

I spun around to see who it was,

only to face another mirror. I walked around the mirror in front of me only to become surrounded by even more mirrors. Everywhere I turned, more seemed to appear. I was surrounded by my own reflection and could not escape it.

Raging and without thinking, I started punching each mirror. But as they broke, they immediately repaired themselves. I threw my body at the mirrors; the glass shattered and pierced my skin, and I screamed in fury. As I shoved myself into the final mirror, I slipped through it and fell, back into the room with the padded walls.