

Quicksand

by Seetha Dodd

The box is palm sized. You wonder if you should open it, but you resist. You tuck it under your bed. Your sleep is troubled by a nightmare you've had before: *You are alone in a large hall and, without warning, the floor becomes quicksand. You are sinking, slowly but undeniably. You try to call for help, but the words do not come. You are not one for symbolism, so you do not try to analyse your recurring nightmare for meaning.*

A week later, you fish the box out from under your bed. You are surprised to find it bigger than before. You lift it onto your bed. *Do not open*, it goads. Do not speak. No good can come of revelations. You place the box in your wardrobe. That night, you wake multiple times, once because you are drowning in quicksand and nobody can hear you. Other times because you need to speak out, but you cannot find the words. You have never been one to ask for help, so you do not.

A month later, you hoist the box from the wardrobe onto your bed. It has doubled in size and is heavy with the weight of everything that is unsaid and unnamed. You consider it, but you do not open the box. That night, you barely sleep. You are afraid to close your eyes because you are tired of quicksand and tired of searching for words that never come. You are not one to complain, so you do not.

The months go by. The box gets larger and heavier. It soon takes over your bedroom, and then your entire house. You must climb over it to get anywhere but it is always in your way. Still, you refuse to open it.

Then one day, inevitably, the box becomes too full to bear the weight of your shame. The bottom drops out and the contents spill all over your life. The missing words, the hidden feelings, they all come tumbling out and there is not enough room to breathe. And slowly, undeniably, like in quicksand, you drown.



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