

STRATA

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Soup the color of puke brims the bowl, spilling on my mail, on *Glamour* and the *Lady Day* catalog, on the invoice from the doctor's office. Last month's CT scan took a full hour in that tunnel, as radiation pulsed through me, photographing layer-upon-layer, my ever-shaking hand stilled by foam barriers and a battery of muscle-relaxers. More than a year now, my hands, my body, have failed me – failed to hold a pen, write a check, carry a tray of soup across a crowded cafeteria. As I set down the tray, the soup brims again, mealy broth puddling on the botched envelope and the skinny, grinning girl gracing the stack of glossy pages. I pad at the stains with a napkin, thinking of ridges in tree bark and of earthquakes, of how even the world must shake open, every so often.



Flash

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