



If You Feel You Must

by J. Bradley

The little brother made of Ken doll heads, now a veteran, sits next to his sleeping son. He musses his son's hair and the boy sighs and shifts beneath his Batman comforter

Why do you like watching him sleep so much, his wife asks. The little brother made of Ken doll heads used to say because he wasn't sure if he'd be coming back from his last tour but there are no more tours for him.

His son wasn't the first miracle. The first miracle happened when the doctor saw him naked, and all his eyes managed to stay shut during the examination. It took years and prayer to accrue the right parts and smells and sounds for a medical professional to certify him healthy enough to die on behalf of a country.

It took his wife awhile to adjust to making love in total darkness. She tries shushing him every time he insists she'll be horrified at the sight of his naked body seen in any kind of light: *you are are my husband. You are beautiful to me,* she always says. He can't trust what eyes and mouths are still intact on his body to not stare at her, to not say *hello*.



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