Two Out of Two

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Two Out of Two

It was after I made you come,
held you between my lips,
that familiar throb
still lingered and I had buried my face
in the soft of your stomach,
when you told me
how you lived
on Kibbutz Zikim, three miles north of Gaza
on the Mediterranean,
how you cooked hundreds of eggs
for the children,
washed the Zikim uniforms
that even you wore:
thick orange t-shirts
heavy with sweat,
canvas drawstring pants
that reminded you of the moldy tent
you slept in on family vacations
under New England, August skies.
You told me how it took you two months
to bare your pale, New York breasts
to the Israeli sun,
Mediterranean sand between your toes,
a borrowed copy of Moby Dick,
and a whole day earned off.
When your skin tingled, pink from exposure,
you packed your things,
headed back to the kibbutz,
through the dunes.
You heard him come up behind you,
mumbling under his breath.
If you were back home,
on the streets of Buffalo,
he would’ve whistled, called out, “Hey baby,
I know what you need. C’mere honey.”
But there, men hissed, growled to show their hunger,
as if you should lie down at their need.
You turned, demanded to know what he wanted.
He laughed, leered at your fear.
When he spoke in his language,
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you begged, “Speak English. Speak English.’
When you tried to keep walking
he lunged at your body.
You swung around, hit him with your towel.
He fed off your outburst,
reached a hand out,
stroked your breast,
and Moby Dick in a right hook
connected with his face.
Three times and he was down in the sand.
As you backed off,
he was on his feet, tracking you.
You aimed a kick at his crotch,
but your well-conditioned, hesitant,
‘don’t hurt him’
Put you off mark, off balance,
and then he had you,
one arm around your neck,
the other inching below your waist.
You screamed for help,
again and again,
interchanging English and Hebrew.
He let you go, saying, “Be quiet.
Be quiet.”
Those were the only English words he spoke.
When you arrived back at your hut
you took a shower,
cut off the long blonde hair
you still wear short.
And now when I hold you,
run my fingers over the shaved
back of your head,
you say, “They can’t catch you this way.
1 out of 3 women, you know.”
1 out of 3
and we, lying side by side,
legs barely touching,
are 2 out of 2.