

Miranda De la Victoria

Tokens

The first words she said to him were left in a note reading **Your snore sounds like gravel in a blender**. She left him smiling as she walked away.

When he asked for her name, she left a piece of paper with the map of Italy on it. Siena was boxed in black marker.

He wanted to know her favorite color. She left him a blue jay feather.

She kept the piano key he gave her when she asked what instrument he played.

He kept the ticket stubs from the movies they watched together, even though they had sat a seat apart.

She carried a compass in her pocket since the day he held it out to her saying **You will never be lost**.

He met her on the grass after she crawled out her bedroom window late at night.

She skipped rocks across the pond while his plunked and sank, both of them not trusting their voices enough to speak.

She let her fingers graze the screen door as he looked in at her from the other side. **My mom's not in a good mood today**. She ignored how he stared at the bruise blushing on her collarbone.

He asked her **Where do you feel most safe?**

She said **I'll show you**.

She waited beside him near the airfield. The buzz of an airplane calmed her nerves.

A burst of red bloomed in the sky and her stomach jilted.

He paid no attention to the man in the parachute. He did not even ask why she felt safe here, but watched instead how the tension in her face receded.

There was something comforting about watching another person control their free fall.

She wanted that. She wanted to control her own parachute sail before a gale got the chance to ravage her into tatters and gaping holes.