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Tender

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Tender

You don't seem to see it
Not like I do.

I sit here hurting—
Holes punched through my heart by traditions-turned-doctrine
and well-meaning pats on the back
to Just get over it
and Trust.

Holes dug by others who didn't understand
but couldn't face that fact, so faked it

Holes pierced by lies—that I was nothing
more than a body or a helpmeet or a servant or a second place or a trophy
or a pedestal or a
quiet submissive doormat who had no worth other than
what she could give

(and give and give)

until she ran out
and was left with empty
holes.

Throbbing, trauma-stricken holes, corroded by poison
vials poured in by abusers
or knocked over by shrugging shoulders, relaxing again.

Still tender to the touch.

Even when it's yours.