

Rita Toma, pseudonym

### Baby Blue

I woke up crying and someone was saying my name. He had a blue mask.

A few cells evacuated. It was a success. Your baby blue has returned to the ocean or the sky, your pick. The blankets, the gown, a vein. Blue leaking everywhere. I blacked out and threw up. Psychologists say blue soothes. That's why they put it in these spaces. But blue is elsewhere, doing something more challenging than that. I turned my cheek on her that day and closed my eyes.

I was in Spain for the first time. No one spoke words I knew. I understood everything through color and knew only my name in that time. They all said it lots of times that day as I sat there silent returning to my mind in a white space next to an ocean. This is the life of a woman.

After the abortion, I found lots of seashells. They eventually started to mean something. Not in the way blue does, but enough. When I passed them, etched into buildings, lined on walkways; I put them in jars. Validation, my direction, my choice. Remnants left behind for me from my daughter. Peace offerings, maybe. That's how I came to forgive myself on behalf of her.

When I think things, they usually become real and so I kept thinking and my healing came. I found myself following the seashells for 20 days straight backpacking the Camino de Santiago. Absorbing every blue on the pilgrimage, picking up shells that lead me to St. James's bones. I found all mine on the way. Sometimes I smiled at them. Other times I peeled them from my skin, burned them, or spit on them and kept walking. I lost weight.

"Don't go through more than you have to," Sarah says. Do not personalize the cells in your uterus. Do not gender them. Your baby is not blue.

My baby is only blue. For the 43 days I knew her, she was blue. She sucked it out of every landscape, pulled it into my belly, and pushed it out of my eyes. If she was anything, she was blue.

I cannot say many absolutely true things. Especially about blue. But I can say that my mother died when I was eleven and since then things hold hues. I don't want to condense my mother into a sentence. She is many, like blue.