

Creeeeeak...

Snap.

I look down, and see that her foot is broken.
The metal is warped and bent,
dirt pressed into the surface
from where hundreds of others have trod on her feet,
passers-by with little care for their destructive footfalls.

I sigh.
Had I not mended this dratted thing just last week?
I suppose that's what I get
for constructing such a pitiful thing from rubbish,
metal scraps salvaged from dumpsters and broken souls.

She does not have the benefits of a regular skeleton,
with bones growing stronger as they mend.
Instead the metal tires.
It is weakened,
prone to further, more severe breakage.
But it is all she has to stand on.

I dig a blowtorch out from a drawer,
along with a pair of pliers.
As I crouch down,
my eyes pause on fresh scratch marks,
pale and angry against the copper of her arm,
before I turn my attention to where it is needed.

As I melt the edges of the broken plate,
the wound glows, red and angry.
It hurts her.
She does not care, not anymore.
It is necessary.

I have no spare metal on me,
so instead I use the pliers to shape what is already there.
My work is clumsy, as always, but it will hold.
Straightening, I observe the results.
My shoddy repair has left an ugly scar.
It is a blueprint for where to snap again.

Shaking my head, I return the items to the drawer.
It is not their rightful place,
but nothing here has one of those anyway.

A silver screw glints in the dim light,
laughter ringing at it falls and rolls across the floor
before it settles in the corner it deems least convenient.
I have not the energy to go after it.
I sigh again, and study my face in the mirror,
adjusting my hair to cover the small hole at the hinge of my jaw.

I will find my screwdriver later.

- Vera