

SUN FUNGUS

I haven't said my skin is ash. I hyperpigment where the band of my sports bra rests, where a racer back runs rigid between my blades, where my favorite strand of pearls wants to lay. I sliver tiny shavings of my skin where these polka-dots amass. I fragment, and I flake, but I fold myself in scarves and sweatshirts so nobody sees.

I haven't said this collects on every person's skin, just better on mine. It appreciates the four hours every weekday I spend outside, where it can absorb the hot, humid air. It appreciates that I sweat when I work out, that I moisten it, that I quench its thirst. It appreciates that I supply it with neighbors too—like asthma and celiac. Yes, this appreciates me.

I haven't said my skin is scales. Fine scales. Pale scales. Pink scales. In the shower, when I exercise, after sunlight. My flesh courses itself into rigid plates. On my back, they look like uneven roof tiles arranged in concentric layers. Patches overlap from head toward toe. Between freckles, they sink their uneven edges like teeth into my ribcage. They indent and project and flex and multiply, and multiply, and multiply.

I haven't said *Malassezia furfur*. Since this inhabits my skin, it will return. Since this can't leave, I can only hope the pale pigment patches on my right shoulder and the russet spots on my spine blend with my natural Band-Aid colored tone. Since I can't seem to shake this species that shadows me, I'll keep itching.

I haven't said my skin is rash. I apply lotion, shampoo, cream, foam, soap. I want to control this, to keep it from growing. Over-the-counter, prescription, topical, homeopathic, breathable, non-greasy, hypoallergenic, who cares. This is here to stay.

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