

## Colleen Doty

### Misery Whip<sup>[1]</sup>

I figured you were leaving.  
You'd had enough.

Your mother left years ago,  
Forced out.  
Then your friends  
Dropped,  
One after the other,  
Their choice.

Roots heaved after our last storm.  
The ground had shifted,  
In the days of calm that followed.

Here you were,  
Signaling  
Your departure would be  
Unsparring.

If you had your way.

Just one more storm  
One more push from the southeast

Yet, you were giving me a choice,  
An act of kindness

Make the next move.

I didn't want to.

Accustomed as I was to your  
Deep grooves that life had worn,  
Folded in tales like the  
Curvatures of your spine,  
Complicated,  
Dangerous.

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<sup>[1]</sup> A Misery Whip is a two-person cross-cut saw.

**Colleen Doty** is a Canadian writer living on Galiano Island, a small island in the Salish Sea in the Pacific Northwest. She was a winner of the Surrey Libraries Young Adult Fiction Contest and is a regular submitter to the *Active Page*. She has written several short stories and is currently working on a novel.