



Broken

Traci L. Slatton

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Slatton has created a beautiful, heart wrenching tale of humanity during the Second World War. When her beloved Ariel is lost, the angel Alia chooses to fall, taking on a human body in Paris on the eve of war. She befriends the city's artists, from Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí to Edith Piaf and Sacha Guitry, and experiences all of Paris's human pleasures: drinking, partying, and having sex with wild abandon. Two men, in particular, catch her affection: bullfighter Pedro and openly Jewish musician Josef. As the war takes over, Alia also finds herself drawn protectively to Josef's widowed sister, Suzanne, and her young daughter, Cécile. But as the Nazi's march in, Alia begins to fear she cannot save them all.

Slatton writes poignantly, with lyrical prose: "I have been shattered, the shattering is still with me. I am only shards now. There is no core." This is a gorgeous philosophical treatise on right and wrong, the "why" behind impossible decisions, and what remains when everything is gone. Slatton guides the reader gently through to the end, all the more heartbreaking for its inevitability, imparting powerful, resonant themes as she goes. Among them, "neutrality is an excuse to give free rein to a bully."

ALLYCE AMIDON (Spring 2015)

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