

## Marked, Outside and In: A Trilogy of 55 Word Stories

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### MARKED

Dear Diary,  
Today I got my first tattoo!  
No, I'm not a 19-year-old sorority sister with Tinkerbell on my sacrum.  
I'm a 43-year-old physician-mother, newly diagnosed with breast cancer.  
Surgery took the cancer out, but even "clean margins" carry a risk.  
These tattoos mark my breast for radiation, and with luck, me as a survivor.

### RADIATION

Elderly man with suspenders, a farmer perhaps?  
Anther older man, who likes the sports section.  
Often, those with walkers, canes, the occasional wheelchair.  
But also, a bald child, a girl, I think. Maybe five.  
Her parents, my age, possibly younger.  
She cries.  
Me too.  
I'd come here every day to spare my child her pain.

### FATIGUE

Medical student: new terminology, endless studying. Fatigue. Severe tiredness. Got it.  
Resident: 36-hour on-call shifts, sleepless. Fatigue. Got it.  
First trimester pregnancy: needing naps. Fatigue. Got it!  
Midlife infectious mono: can't sit up to knit in bed. Fatigue. Got it!  
Screening mammogram: cancer. Surgery, radiation. Fatigue. Really, I understand!  
Can I be done now?