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# Strained Stories

by Erin Mellor

I can only tell embellished stories.  
They begin as beige throw pillows,  
comfortable and unobtrusive,  
gradually garnering metallic threads and lustrous tassels.  
The creation strengthens the narrative.  
In form,  
the two stories—the situation and the imposed arc,  
are identical.  
In utility,  
strained.  
In the ability to mesmerize,  
justified.  
We want our stories to reflect the person we believe ourselves to be.