

# My Own Skin

*by* Erin Zulkoski

I'm chubby. Plump. Pudgy. Portly. Bulky. Buxom. Rotund. Ample. Hefty. Corpulent. Zaftig.

I look at myself in the full-length mirror hanging on the back of the closet door, and play with the bulge around my mid-section; running my hands across the layer of fat that surrounds me, pinching my love handles between my thumb and forefinger. I poke a long finger at my thick thighs, and grab my full ass in my hands. I squish my chin down to my chest, creating a double chin. If I had lived in medieval times, I would have been held in high regard for my physical appearance—no doubt I would have been swooned over for my plump knees and ample bosom.

I don't remember a time when I wasn't pleasantly plump. I've seen pictures of myself from my childhood, and I appeared of average weight, compared to my peers, but I do know that between the summer of sixth and seventh grade, I gained weight; a lot. Thinking back to it, I seem to recall that I was having a hard time adjusting to going from elementary school to junior high. My mother, being the nurturing-by-feeding type, fed me, and fed me she did. It's been an uphill battle to control my emotional eating ever since.

About three years ago, I weighed a ridiculous amount. The heaviest I've ever been in my life. I look back at pictures of myself from that time, and am shocked at myself. Even better yet, I started my new job during that time, so my ID badge has my plump face smiling back at me whenever I use it. I decided enough was enough and enlisted help in a program to help me shed the unwanted weight. I lost fifty pounds, bringing myself down to a weight that I hadn't been since I was in high school. Not really a terrific boast, as, like I said, I've always been portly, but it was definitely better than what I had been.

Then, the weight slowly crept back on; not all of it, but enough to classify me as "obese" by the Body Mass Index. I used to fret about my weight, think that if I was a certain weight, I'd surely unlock the key to my happiness, become wildly popular amongst my peers, and find all the success I could ask for. This, of course, is a crock of shit.

A person's happiness and success are not weighed (no pun intended) by how many pounds a person is, and as I approach becoming thirty-years-old, I'm coming to terms with the fact that I will never be a size 8, or have flat abs. And that's fine by me. So, to celebrate, I'm going to eat a cookie

