

## Death Sands

I have a complicated relationship with the ocean  
I would call it a push/pull dynamic  
when I arrive on the beach  
after being desert-bound for so long  
it doesn't greet me like I thought an old friend would  
and it does not welcome me with open arms  
it pulls me in and tells me  
you are a small creature and you will return to me one day  
and pushes me back out onto the hard land

I am pretty sure that the ocean has consumed me in many past lives  
and led to many of my deaths  
that my bones have washed up on the shores of this world  
many times over  
broken and rounded down beach pebbles  
white carcasses sun-bleached and agitated into sand  
granules of older times

when I walk the shores, I listen  
and I remember that the smell of death consists partially of algae and seafoam  
and remember the the ocean will kill you very quickly if you let it

powerful forces  
death-mother  
become familiar to me again

I start to remember who I used to be every time my feet touch the water

and hit a sharp rock with my heel  
and when I harvest the salt from jagged crags  
I'll just sit there and bury my feet in the sand  
to cinch off a little bit of the overwhelm of living a separated life

I try to imagine what it would be like to sit under the ocean floor  
watching my ancient ancestors play out their lives  
the sea anemones swaying back and forth  
creating a living home  
teaching me how to breathe again

water becomes air  
after each crashing wave, I remember that the ocean is eternal  
and really good at making sand  
and that there will always be waves  
even though each one hits my nervous system uniquely

I no longer want to forget my own deaths  
I want to remember how to breathe in the bubbles  
how to sway back and forth in the waves  
let the ocean water reach my wounds  
wounds that I didn't have before I left the cold saltwater a long time ago  
maybe it will remind me of who I was before I was born

and while sometimes now I wish that my bones could also be rounded down  
and softened back into a gentle nothingness  
the sun bleaching my being back into infinity  
for now, I am still fine with feeling the pain of my blood pumping

my muscles aching against small rocks

and my brain making thoughts while staring at the horizon, unsure of its edges

so while I am here I will fill my chest with broken crab claws and fish bones, I could use the calcium

Add salt and fine sand back into my blood,

cover my wounds in seaweed, and douse my fiery feet

take home a shell or two

and when I get back to my home of desert soils and cloudless skies

I will find the time to fill my bathtub with seawater

so that I will remember

that my soul is much more like the ocean than any pond we have around here