

Rock Skipping with Arms

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You are every person and the world.

Your hands are the hands I want to paint as they free fall down the coast for a rock to skip. There they are as the weight leaves and your eyes ask if I was watching. I respond with my arm as it passes a small rock into your palm. Salt slips between the words you might know, but do not say. You throw another oval.

For everything I tell you, your body says, I know. To which my back asks, how? Look at the big picture, you suggest with your shoulders arched and elbows bent. The world, you say again with your angled wrists and forearms. But—now it's my shoulders and elbows—I want more than what the world has put into words. Your eyes ask why. I push a flow of sand and rocks over my feet.

They are cold against my skin.

This way—your neck angles down the strip of shore. Standing, the sand spirals back to its purpose and the coast reacts to our touch with a falling. Here, your shoulders tap when you hand me a moment in the sun, rock skipping with arms, as we collapse down the coast pressed together like shells. The world has unfolded in a precious kind of way, drooping to the sway of timelessness. You are there, face sunflowered to the sun and I can see those creases from every life you've ever lived.

Every person and the world.

With my hands as stars they cross the sand with legs of their own, picking like gulls at crushed clams against rocks, until landing on a pebble for you. With an extended elbow, I say here, a piece of my living; and with those hands I want to paint, you press the pebble against your pocket full of ovals. And with my stomach I say, the world feels big and small. And with your worried ears you say, do you need food? And my gut responds, no, this is human. But—your creases and shoulder blades shrug—you are hungry.

No, this is my living, I say by digging at another flow of sand and rocks with my feet.

And you are stagnant, for a second, when the water is not.

Ok, your fingertips space as another rock leaps across tension. There is rolled glass tangled in my hands and somehow it is more than what the world could ever put into words. Look, my hand says, green glass between its lifelines. And you hold your place at my side whispering to the glass.

And I think it's your eyes and hands that have every life and the world beneath them, because when you blink there are words no one knows that cascade across your living, and when you hold the glass it fits into your palm as if it has once lived in every palm and there they all are now, as yours. That's how you always know, that's how you found yourself.

The sun is crumbling in the water and your legs whisper, it's going to be dark soon and you are hungry, to which my feet answer let's watch the sky turn. Your calves and knees listen and find a space to watch a moment finish. On the sidewalk dock above a leaving ocean, our sides tap, this is right, this is living, back and forth and we are every person and the world.