

## When Sky Touches Ground

In the orange bloom of summer, my mother took me to the coast. Along this windy cusp of Earth the panoramic view of oceanic blue and sunset sky mixed as if on a painter's palette. *Perfection*, my mother's smiling eyes declared, and we planted seating beneath us and food alongside us with steam from our Korean cuisine dancing in air, a fresh fragrance of sea cleansing the soft billowing of our lungs. As if an addict following a vicious habit, I grabbed for my phone, but my mother swiped it away before my fingers could swipe away this precious moment. Through our hearts and not merely our minds we could see more of the world than our phones could show us. I stared at the blue, its waves undulating like hands waving back at me a sign of friendship.

Night greeted us with a gentle hug, unveiling the moon shining on the lonely rocks that protruded from the serene sea ahead. Throughout the landscape, RVs and tents illuminated their lights, as if they were ships of the night anchoring and set to sail their own directions in time. Neighbors around us bounced to music so distant as to be a whisper of secrets. Children and adults swayed their hips and feet, crackling in air like the campfires that warmed them.

I glimpsed at my mother, her gaze reflecting streams of watercolor stars and the opaque backdrop of night. She worked in a kitchen most of her life, preparing food and cleaning the house, without a trace of gratitude to guide her toward the warmth of appreciation. Constant work led to constant arguments: I can hear my parents yelling still, cycles of a repeating family pattern left unfulfilled like the shells on the sand with their insides hollow.

We walked down to the shoreline, our feet smudging thick, muddy sand as if footprints of runners escaping into darkness. As the sea continued to strengthen its movement, we found drier sand to rest. My mother continued glimpsing the nightlife and ocean view, softly wiping melted tears from her warm chocolate eyes. "The sea or the sky? Which do you prefer?" she asked. No answer could be true. All that mattered was that she was there. Whether or not I had said sea or sky, I knew that when I was alone with my mother I had Heaven all to myself.