

**rooted**

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Traip Academy

age 15

no one wishes for their home to crumble  
nor to shift with the swelling tides  
you might lie, "if only  
the water wasn't so numbing"  
but you don't will it  
because the cold is a part of you  
it is buried in your knees  
and clenched around your jaw  
and no matter the whispers you mutter  
it is the cold that keeps you rooted in the sand

the bitterness burns your skin  
it pulls you under  
even when only your toes are submerged  
it grounds you  
even when only your soles are buried in the sand  
it forces you to breathe  
not with your lungs  
but with your trembling shoulders  
with your stomach and with your hands  
it bends your broken neck  
and straightens your crooked spine  
so you're a little taller  
if only for a single gasp

no matter how numb and cold your feet  
no matter how violently you shake  
you still wander back  
because it engulfs you  
it catches you  
it holds you  
and when it wraps itself  
raw around your ankles  
you know you're home