

Dream

By Anya Boardman

Last night I dreamed that we were together again
I was sleeping on your chest and we were talking about how much
Time had passed and how silly it was that
We were away from each other for so long
And when I woke up I knew
That you wouldn't be there
But it was still nice to imagine
Myself in your arms, holding your hand.

I don't remember the first time I held your hand
But I remember that hot morning, sunny summer,
When we were the thing that was easy.
I remember those first days together
Watching the patterns on the water
And talking ourselves in dizzy circles
About why we were here and what we knew
It was hours on the beach in an island of calm
Where nothing could see us or touch us
Except the sky and the sand, the long river that wrapped around
I don't remember the first time I held your hand but it could've been then
Throwing avocados and stepping tenderly through the forest
On and over logs with giddiness and trepidation
The days were long and they were good
We named the things that felt right
And talked until even the bushes wanted to listen in.

I remember my anxiety too
Tall rooted and heavy like the big trees above us
Looming and promising something
Relegating us both to unworthiness
In the face of everything too-perfect we'd stepped into
I don't know what parts were real
But I remember lying on my back in the dirt
My mouth full of gummy bears and laughter for some reason
I remember feeling fast and the light in the branches
Dancing on our cheeks and kissing our blushing faces
As we tumbled for home.

And I remember the changes, like a light switch or some other
too-fast and hard thing from the real world
I remember feeling sad and feeling far away and feeling nothing
And in the end we wound up a long way from our beach
And the cool and sharp air that brought truth and light to the morning
Fell on some other ground, but not ours.
I remember meeting you but not holding your hand for the first time
I also don't remember when I started saying goodbye
Maybe it was always underwritten, even then when I was still trying to know you.

In my dream I don't know if this was all figured out
Or if it was woven in there too,
In that peaceful world that rose and fell on your breathing chest.
This world has still been turning without us as far as I can tell
It always has been, and maybe it always was without us
Maybe I'll never know what it would've been
To meet you on that beach and not think about goodbye.

But that is the purpose of these dreams
And the place where I can meet you under the softness of the stars
To catch the pieces that went missing and quietly arrange them
To hold what cannot be held and try what cannot be tried
To parse out what is written, what is real, what is solid
And what is made to melt, into the gentle arms of morning,
To be let go of, like the night, as it slips into the day,
Or what is to be clung to, desperately, like the Earth, as it whirls around.