Barrier Island

by Dianne McKnight-Warren

At the beach house your parents bought before you were born the ocean sloshes over sea oats. It's February, flat dull as mud.

We walk the narrow beach, ancient sharks' teeth spread over the sand like ash. Requiem sharks you say they're called for schooling so close to the surface. I look for dark flashes in the low tide, in the long arm of the inlet.

That evening I make soup in a pine and linoleum kitchen. Rain pelts the house as if to wound it. The ocean is more awake now, teasing the picture window. Sometimes it slaps too hard.

Later you light a fire we don't stay up to watch. Under the white spread all night I hear the ocean gaining ground.

I will not know you old like the ocean knows this house.

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