

Low Clouds

by Elizabeth J. Colen

I will say everything I can say and then you will say something too. There is anger in both of us, fusing the closer we get. For now we stand at the lip of the world, waves lapping grey stones under a grey sky: our little world. There is something to this. Something that wants to be calm, to be easy. "Look at that," you say, pointing out far in the ocean. I nod, but see nothing. I'm willing to look anyway.

The dog brings a stick. There is bravery to the womb of her mouth keeping wood in, seawater out as she huffs the stick back in from where we toss it: out there.

We build a place to be safe, start talking in circles and so build that way. We start with small stones, then large. We work quietly. Our concentric circles grow. Wet sand cold under our toes. We move on to driftwood, again starting small: with what we might use for fire if we stay too long. Then the big ones: white logs as big as we can haul them. Fourteen circles in all, crabs lumber over them, dry kelp blows at one edge. The dog is careful, having been told. She goes back into the ocean, which is ruining the last, widest circle into a C. We lay in what we have made, minute fleshy bullets in the target we have made.

When we see it from above we will know the sea is near, as is the grey, as is the end. When we see it from above the plane will be circling, destroying low clouds. When we see it from above we will be listening, we will be watching, we will go there as fast as we can.

