

ALEC

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For Angela

She crossed the beach toward me one evening in the fog.

it was not an ordinary fog, but one that arrives only rarely,
wrapping sand walkers in spotlights of soft and moist worlds,
the mist's droplets creating pixel-like images.

only us,
in a concentric circle moving
as we walked
though distant echoes
crept into our moving spiral
and we passed them, unseeing
we walked along, the mist
holding us tight
closing off the ocean as
we heard its roar to the left
blind to the shops, cotton candy
and various sundries of another galaxy
to the right

only a doily of foam occasionally
fanning our toes.

She told me about the fire near her house
That happened another foggy day
At the factory in New York near the shore.
A fireworks manufacturer.
“Can you imagine”
She asked me
“What that was like?
Flying spinners, roman candles, crackling mines.
Can you imagine?
Thousands flying into the sky
In that mist on the beach with the waves?”

She held my hand years
Later
When we walked into the room
With the tiny white
Casket.

I'd never seen
one so small
As my belly whirred with
New life
And she stood,
Tears all used up and silent,
With her family who knew
To say
nothing

They don't talk about him much now.
I imagine I wouldn't much either

After the day in the rain under the canopy
To ensure he wouldn't lie in any puddles
In the cemetery by the sea
And we walked away
Mud splattering the shiny white and gleaming sides
As he slipped down into the earth.

They don't talk about him much now.
I imagine I couldn't much either.

Although I think of him as I
Sit on this beach and listen
To fireworks in
The dark.

* **Dr. ELIZABETHADA A. WRIGHT** is Associate Professor of English and Communications at Rivier College. She has a Ph.D. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, an M.A. from Columbia University and a B.A. from Hamilton College. A rhetorical theorist, she writes and publishes on collective memory, material culture, as well as nineteenth-century women's rhetoric and education. Before joining academia, she worked in the professional theater, and still participates in the theatre business to some degree. She is also active in her community and has published poetry.