**A Confession**

Sarah Xu

I ache for you,

not in the way swollen feet seek rest,

not in the way shriveled roots crave rain,

but in the way the battered shoreline still yearns for the sea’s kiss

as it sears scars into earthen flesh,

iron welts just beginning to heal

while old wounds oxidize in the salton air.

I long to hold you,

not in the way mothers soothe infants to sleep,

not in the way the mind welcomes joys of days past,

but in the way Atlas cannot set his burden down

for fear of the sky’s collapse,

for fear of an unknown fate

worse still than eternal pain.