

don't let go

i step slowly, the soft sand surrounding my feet.
i have a little time to play with it, scrunching my
toes in and out. i only have time because i'm waiting for him,
waiting for him to take me out to the azure mural
undulating in between the ground and the sun.

"please be careful" she whispers to him. The mural is
scattered and tattered, not safe
for someone so small.

"it will be fine" he says back to her, arrogance in every inch of his words.
they think i can't hear. but i can.

we start to walk closer to the frantic portrait. i take
long strides to keep up with
him. it helps that he's carrying the board, it weighs him
down, makes it easier for us to be in tune.

he jumps into the different blue strokes of paint,
me trotting closely behind. rocks almost
scrape my feet, i quickly dodge at the last second, simultaneously
avoiding the blue strokes from staining my face.

"just a little farther" he says. the farther we go
the darker the paint color gets.

after what seemed to be a thousand long
seconds, we finally, came to a stop. i'm not sure
if i'm ready. the strokes keep getting
thicker and
scarier the longer we stay.

i hop on the board, knowing
it will only get worse.

"don't
let
go"

i say.

"i'm scared"

"i won't" he says in that deep,
gravelly, voice that sounds like rocks against tar.

the strokes are being painted gradually behind us.
they pick up the speed,
faster
faster
faster
as it moves to us. he
pushes the board while i lay on top, holding on as tight
as my little fingers could. then it
happened.
the betrayal.
he let go.

why? rings through my brain like a telephone. i have no time
to answer. the blue strokes
swallow me up. i'm tossed and
turned in the avalanche of shades.
i'm whirled and twirled like delicate clothes in a washing machine.
i close my eyes so they won't hurt from the chemicals.

just when i think it's over
something hard strikes my skull.
i feel the pain immediately, blood hitting the lightest shade of blue.
i stumble out of the
paint, running towards her, wet
feet collecting sand. i
cry, falling into her open arms, blood
collecting on her bathing suit.

he races up to us.
"i'm so sorry" *he* utters quickly. you can hear the regret in
every syllable.

she gives a
disappointed stare.
"you let go" i choke out between
sobs.

i wonder if you always will.

By Liliana R. '30