

# Ocean Bloom

WRITTEN BY: JORDAN NISHKIAN

"You can trust people with grief,"  
she says, piecing together a bouquet  
of bee balm and blueweed.  
My fingers pick at heads of sea lavender  
I carry through tides.

Rushing sand scuffs the backs of my knees  
the way pink thrift sends fleeting scents  
of honey before swallowed by salt.

She plucks out leaves,  
brown and curling,  
tossing them into passing foam.  
Over her shoulder,

"Further."

I let my dress into the waves,  
steadying my pace, unswayed  
by the fabric's heavy ebb and flow;  
my feet trudge against grain.

Her skirt billows around her waist:  
a temporary buoyancy,  
momentary lightness.

Plumes of purple and strikes of crimson  
fall behind her. She stops  
to where our elbows graze the water  
and our toes tap sand without sinking.

She stares at the sun.  
I watch the sky burn.

My hands release,  
unwrap from tender stems,  
relinquishing them to the sea—  
undulations meet unfurled palms.  
"They'll wash back, you know."

I know.  
She is more intimate with death:  
tides crashing behind us,  
bubbles settling on the surface,  
a white-knuckled scream.

She throws her fistful overhead,  
petals scattering before they hit water.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY: EVIE SHAFFER