

## My Happiest Memory

I pull out my happy memories like a faded and oft-touched Polaroid kept in a wallet so it's always close by. The heat from the sand beneath my feet is ever so slightly more intense than the sunshine falling on my bare chest. I fancy I can almost breathe the sunshine on me when a gentle wisp of cold air no stronger than a butterfly breath slips gently over my neck, and a sound like distant thunder and effervescence call to me. I open my eyes and look out at the vast blue Atlantic and I feel utterly present, entirely at peace. I am standing at the southernmost tip of the world beside a friend who has always felt more like a brother to me, and we are smiling.

We speak of nothing and deep things, content to share the experience, content in the knowledge that our words are small braids of thought to remind ourselves that we are both here, and that we are glad to share this space.

Later, as the sun throws its wild flame across the belly of clouds, we cross a tiny stream and pause as it makes its way easily under, over and around our toes to the ocean. Like our feet, we bask in the wash of gratitude that seems to flow from the steady peacefulness of nature. It seems a cruel trick to have to leave this place, but we don't leave it. We climb into our cars, and we set off to other places, but some depth of feeling has soaked into our very being, and we carry the heat, the peace, the memory with us. Even as we touch down on different continents, our feet still anticipate the calm and steady touch of nature.

Now, when I remove my shoes, a slight trace of calm flows down my spine, from memory to earth, and I close my eyes and unfold my Polaroid. And I smile again.