Mackenzie Rodgers

Squint
They say the salt will sting your cuts
and the sand infect your wounds.
That the ocean rages dark and wild in tandem with the moon.
But they don’t know my body;
shaped and tumbled by the sea.
The salt that slips beneath my skin
is already part of me.

They say the sun with dry you up;
blister, bubble, peel, and scar.
They think that nothing safe can come from a fire-breathing star.
But they don’t know my skin;
and its tendency to turn
like a flower towards the sunlight never fearing it will burn.

I want to be that type of scary;
like the cracking of a whip,
or a sudden gust of wind that fills the sails upon a ship.
I want to be the kind of light--
not just a shimmer or a glint--
but the blinding kind of whiteness that makes others have to squint.

The forces of this planet
that keep them cowering in fear,
are buried deep within me simply waiting to appear.
I am the ocean and the sunshine
made in visage of the One.
They wouldn’t want to catch me if I ever tried to run.
Advice
On my worst day
came the best advice.
“Eventually an entire day will pass by without a thought of him…
but you’re not there yet.
And that’s okay.”
Suddenly,
there was a finish line to cross.
A calendar somewhere in the future
was marked “Congratulations, you didn’t think of him today.”
I guess I thought I would know the day when it came.
But it didn’t happen that way.

The days passed by, painfully at first.
I kept the finish line in sight,
but checking my progress only put me two steps back.
Like when someone saying
“please don’t cry” makes it that much more likely.
All I can say now
is that it hurt until it didn’t.
And I have no idea when it happened,
but now I know that time won’t run races
and it doesn’t bother with calendars.
Then & Now
How easy it was to see your dark eyes
and imagine galaxies within them.
To take your warm hands
and think of hearths.
Your shining smile
and think of diamonds.

Now I know those dark eyes
are hiding black holes.
That those warm hands
are capable of burning me.
And that diamond teeth
are made sharp by cutting words.
The First Week
My eyes should droop, heavy with sleep,
but my chest bears all the
        weight.

My mind should buzz, alive with dreams,
yet here I lie
        awake.

My arms should hug your favorite toy,
but all they do is
        shake.

But,

I’m relieved that I still feel at all,
when I’ve felt my own heart
        break.