Enya Meng

His eyes are like pearls but his grip is the sun.

"Kill me," he says.

She starts, flinching backwards but he keeps her in place, burning.

"What?" It's an effort to breathe past the salt that coats her throat. He's too close-- too warm. She remembers a time when she didn't think she could get close enough, but now she can’t escape.

"I won't let you die," he says, and she shudders when he tightens his grip. "Not like this, not into senseless foam. Take me instead."

"You can’t. You have your fiancé.” His heartbeat pounds in her ears like the breaking of the tide, rhythmic and roaring. He pulls her fist to his throat, the jagged edge of obsidian scraping yielding human skin.

“I don’t care,” he says with force, the sound sharp and jarring, and she thinks of the quiet dip and roll of water.

“But I do,” when she pulls at her arm, it doesn’t budge; scales flake and twist in the air. “Don’t you care what I think?”

“Not now. Not when the sun’s coming up.” He pushes harder and the black rock finally finds purchase, blood thick as molasses hot on her coral skin.

“Stop it,” she rasps. “Stop it!”

“It’s okay, it’s okay,” his fingers on her chin brand a chalky tattoo. “You’ll live, you’ll be safe. You’ll be okay.”

She tries to blink away the grains of sand that cling to her eyelashes, but they scratch hot grey-white streaks and well up in her eyes; the world brims with sunlight.