

SECRETS

by Chole Woggon

I never knew him.

He was hidden behind the insecurities of a past painted in poetry, sand, and a country that did not really belong to him. It was a country constructed of roots tying him to instability and political turmoil, nestled in a soil his ancestors' feet had curled their toes in. A country he did not believe in, but impossible to brush from the curls of his hair. Here, his voice could not be stripped of the subtle sounds of not belonging.

"This is where I will end up," he said, "With a wife whose skin of clouds could cover any painful light; she will always move as I wish, morphing from clear to gray, evaporating at my say, wrapping me in comfortable cotton if I please. But she will never understand me because I live within fine lines of two places I cannot call my own."

I imagine her, his wife. I imagine her because I can never be her. I am not made of wispy wavering. I'm not a beautiful shape shifter. I don't glide gracefully across an open sky at the whim of a force outside my control. I change; I'm not saying I don't. But my shifting form is not an elegant sight for the eyes like those dusty clouds.

The way I change is ugly. Sticky and murky and stubborn. It's like mud. I am the soil; the same soil roots of ancestry take firm hold. I am like the Earth, plant a seed in me and it will grow.

It will grow, and it will grow, and it will grow.

A thick henna stained memory, a piece of hair blowing in the wind, a foam flower atop toffee colored crema. Our bodies, our naked bodies wrestled in sheets. Your inner loneliness. Your miserable loss of innocence, your empty couch. My hands bear understanding but are left empty.

I am forever planting seeds, the death of one to birth another. You were so sure you knew me