

## Beetles and a Breeze

By Holly Dunlea

I walk this beach road  
that I walked in childhood.  
It runs straight for a mile.  
Sand threatens to swallow it during windy days and storms,  
but it is the mirror of my life,  
and I'm careful to avoid  
the cracks.

I was expected to be good.  
The flower I picked off the neighbor's bush  
was my first lie to my mother.  
"I found it on the road."  
My mother was a Christian. She believed me,  
or pretended to.  
She stood back  
while I fought college temptations that were framed  
within a flower power that wilted when touched.

I called home once a week with a prearranged code--  
my parents taught me how to cheat the AT&T monster--  
their Christian doctrine allowing parishioners to be thrifty,  
and our conversations reminded me where I started.  
Still I danced through the reeds,  
flicking my Rapunzel hair, singing to my white knight.  
I listened for horses and raised my banner for a triumphant return  
until my marsh reed adventures  
dissolved in the Cape breeze,  
marrying damsels and monsters with shadows of the past.  
Windswept sand carried weeds, flowers and beetles  
into the bordering wetland,  
erasing my story.  
I breathe in.  
The salt air seasons my thoughts  
while I listen to a fog horn symphony  
and write into the night about lies, beetles and a breeze.