

**Waves, *fuerte* and unmatched in the summer months,
plow in to the sides of his small fishing boat.
First went the bow, and the propellers shattered next.
Papas boat went down before he had the chance to find his rosary.**

"Father of one dead in boating accident off the shore of Monterrico, Guatemala."

The news put it hastily, no emotion, *sin disculpas*.

The pain was deep.

Papa took his fishing boat out that night like he did every weekend,
after I got home from school and he kissed me on the head and
told me there was rice in the cooker and beans on the counter.

Just like every *Viernes*.

Papa, why'd you leave that night?

He learned to fish from his papa, and to the community's disdain, he taught me.

He called the ocean his *mar bonita*, his beautiful sea.

I was the only thing he loved more.

Papa, why'd you leave that night?

When he left, the *olas*, waves, were big.

He knew it was dangerous, but papa sometimes got lost in *mar bonita* beauty,
one thing he passed onto me besides a funeral to plan and rice and beans.

Papa, why'd you leave that night?

The water taught love, taught patience.

Through its consistent ebb and flow, it taught me how to be unconditional in all that I did

I think it taught papa everything he knew about how to be a parent,

besides from his papa, my *abuelito*.

The crash of a wave was much like my papa's ferocious love.

It covered everything it touched; refreshed it.

And then the wave would pull back into the earth, ready to do it again and again.

To love, again and again.

Papa, why'd you leave that night?

The last time we went to the water together, we went to the shore after my classes.

We walked on the black volcanic sand that burned my toes.

Monterrico is known for its baby sea turtles,

and every visit we let a new batch into the water

to start their new aventura.

Papa, why'd you leave that night?

I have decided, this morning, I will go to the water again.

I pack a plastic grocery bag with one of papa's rosaries and a book.

It was a quick travel, one that I had done many times before, though never alone.

One mile down a road with tackle shops on my right and three fruit stands on my left.

A quarter mile down a beaten path shrouded in trees and sand packed down by many travelers.

Suddenly, the trees give way to water.

My heart shatters for the loss of my old life, one where I would walk hand in hand with papa down to the boats.

Past the trees is a hidden corner, behind small *tiendas* selling souvenirs.

Papa and I's favorite spot.

A hammock lays there, one we often shared when the sand got too hot to sit on.

I lay my grocery bag on the hammock and look down.

My father's face is in that water, and I smile.

He is in the crashing waves that spread over everything they care for.

He is in the innocence of the sea turtle.

He is in the black sand, you find specks of it on you no matter how long it has been since you've seen the beach.

I no longer ask why papa left that night.

He is with his *mar bonita*, and with each time I walk down to the black sand, crashing waves, I am with papa.