

Red-Skied Mornings

by Rebecca Thrush

Every letter brought the promise
Not of your return, but of ships—
Tiny, penciled, dreamlike
I floated into your presence
like driftwood and seaweed
On the unseen planks beneath
A smiling, cartoon dad's feet.
None of your words seemed to stick
Except for the larger-than-life closings
Boisterously red, with love—
like your face after laughter—
And lines sharper than your freshest dress whites.
I wish I had known the specifics
of your pacific escapades—
too young to ask then
Old enough now to know better than ask.
Sometimes I wonder if you ever really came home
Your mind always dreaming of ships
Always in the night—
floating away to greener grasses
You made it seem like anywhere could be home
Because all I needed was a letter, your sails
The folded edges of a once-crisp page
So I get why it's hard to stay planted in one place
When you used to live on a turtle's back—
Even if the shell you came back in
was heavily weathered

Rebecca Thrush was a runner-up for the 2021 Wright Award with *Line of Advance* and won honorable mention for Viewless Wings' Scary Poetry Contest. Her poetry has been published both online and in print by various journals; her artwork is also online with *Decomp Journal*. The daughter of two Navy veterans, writing became a creative outlet as well as a connection to her father during the years he was active duty.