

Surfing Again

Simone King

For Mark

The sea calms and the surfers form a circle in the water under the late morning sun. Pat holds the Tupperware, the calcium-carbonate tailings of you. He tells your myth: the fearless traveller before Lonely Planet walking the desert palace of Leh, flinging the train doors open to the Nag Champa air and flowered corpses of Varanasi. *Enjoy, my friend*, I imagine him saying, *this next destination, this opening of light*. I'm stranded on the tideline, toes furling and unfurling in foam. My stories are smaller – cumin seeds crushed in a mortar, curry passed between us in your succulent garden, and how, as I pushed you in your chair toward the sea to watch a rising swell, your creased face calmed. Now the red box that holds you trembles. The surfers turn and find the sea and ride the break in one bronze line. And I see how the sea makes all bodies one. Pat pulls off the lid, and all the pieces of you – the punch lines of your jokes, your love of Marquez, marijuana and strong women – return, meet their final belonging in salt water.