Bay Sunday

W.J. Herbert

1.

Wind hits the cliff face and climbs the palisade as three men at a slatted table play cards. Two wear hats. A third faces the sun and smokes. All three are gray-haired, but none is my father. He wouldn’t have played without scotch on a Sunday or sat on a park bench, anyway.

2.

A man holding a child speaks to her in Mandarin as he touches a small seat attached to the back of a bike. He pats handlebars and points to spokes, saying bike every twenty words or so, then taps the front wheel gently, the way you would touch the shoulder of an old friend.

3.

Some Sundays even if I’m not near the bay, I imagine my father playing solitaire at a slatted table as I lean over the cliff rail, watching waves that grapple with the beach as they leave it.

On the bike path below, grit spins under a stream of cyclists as a man wipes a child’s tear with the edge of his sleeve and speaks to her in a language so soft and low the bay curves like an ear to hear it.