



---

Volume 26  
Issue 1 *Planet Nowhere* (2017-2018 Issue)

Article 22

---

4-17-2018

## Proximity

Ayla Johnson  
*Concordia University - Portland*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#)

---

### CU Commons Citation

Johnson, Ayla (2018) "Proximity," *The Promethean*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 1 , Article 22.  
Available at: <http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol26/iss1/22>

This Story is brought to you for free and open access by CU Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Promethean by an authorized administrator of CU Commons. For more information, please contact [libraryadmin@cu-portland.edu](mailto:libraryadmin@cu-portland.edu).

## Proximity

*Ayla Johnson*

There is a man across the sea.

I do not know him.

On Friday, I woke to the sound of his tortured wailing. He was closer then—floating just beyond my defenses. I could see his eroded smile; his sandcastle ruins. He had picked away at his dignity, leaving him scabbed all over. For a moment, his red hands looked familiar, but a wave of uncertainty washed the thought away. I have not recognized him since.

Each day, the man drifts further off, a shrinking silhouette against the horizon. I think he is drowning. Water crashes violently over his head and seaweed tentacles form unbreakable knots around his waist. His wiry arms undulate like white flags in the distance and sometimes his desperate pleas carry on the wind—

“...mean anything.”

“Just talk to...”

“DANIEL, PLEASE!”

—but there’s no one around for miles. No one who can help him.

I cannot help him.

I am an island. I was formed by molten rage rapidly cooled in an ocean of tears. My heart is hardened like igneous crust. I am new territory—no longer fit to settle.