

The temporary face by Imtiaz Dharker

I draw your face on the huge sand
in the early morning, when small crabs
run and hide in the holes
I have provided for your eyes.

I go away. Through the day
people come and go, knowing nothing
but themselves, the sun on shoulders,
salt, fish, net. They scuff.

your outlines, walk across your mouth,
they put down footprints in your eyes
this makes you real, peels back
your absence, lets your image heal

like a temporary skin. I learn to
love the thing that has to be erased,
the thing I may not be allowed to keep,
sand that runs away beneath my running feet

from Leaving Fingerprints, Bloodaxe, 2009