

VENICE BEACH

Deborah Miranda

Turtle Woman wants bare feet on sand that goes on for miles,
hair whipped into knots by wind. She wants salt, bits of ancient

mountains between her teeth, old hand-painted VW vans
in parking lots, curtains made from thin beach towels.

She wants tattoos of dolphins and mermaids; Muscle Beach's
strut and sweat, battle cries of seagulls, low fog blurring

waves. Turtle Woman wants to walk past decades of loss,
past erasure. She wants to walk so far, so long that she walks

right around the spiral of history, back into that black and white
snapshot taken in 1962: her first wobbly steps on this beach,

where blue water baptized her into a tribe, named her
with a blood-sister vow. Turtle Woman wants the smell

of exile scratched off her skin, wants to smell like ocean,
like history. Like home.