The Field of Broken Mirrors

by Michael Alan Brich

We were lost in the field of broken mirrors.
Maybe ten or twelve of us.
We had been walking for days.
Maybe years.
Maybe our whole lives. Who could tell?
Ankles and shins cut and sliced thick with scar tissue
over scar tissue.
Our broken reflections moving beneath us with each step
as we searched for the ocean
where it is rumored
the mirrors melt into the clear surface of the water.
We thought we were getting close.
Someone said they smelled salt.
That was when James lost his photographs.
He had been carrying them since we left.
School pictures and family.
All the things that photographs are.
They slipped from his long fingers into the shards at his feet.
This has happened to all of us.
We stopped and watched him try to find them.
He was bent down looking at all the broken reflections of himself
staring back from the ground.
And then
before anyone could stop him
he plunged his long hands into the broken mirrors.
Pulled them back red and torn.
Cupped them over his face
and cried.
His shoulders heaved and his tears
leaked through his fingers
mixing with the fresh blood of his hands
and falling onto the broken mirrors beneath him.
We all knew what this was like
and one by one
we began to cry with him.
Our tears piled up around him and we cried more
and more until they
became a river that carried us
into the ocean of our own broken reflections.