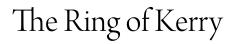
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## The Ring of Kerry

by Alexandra Parthun

I had never preferred the open air. My shoes were always too nice for mud, and when we ran off that bus, I watched only my feet as we climbed down the incline of bumpy rocks. But the moment that my shoes hit the gray sand, I looked up. The ocean glittered and the sun's sudden glare hit my eyes. Smooth black rocks rose around me, framed by patches of vibrant grass that blew in the breeze. I stood in the center of it all, and the earth finally felt big enough.