

BlueHouse Journal

issue 3
WATER

november 2020



in this issue

please note ::

we are lucky enough to be joined by some wonderful young writers in this issue
please be aware however, not all content is suitable for younger readers
some pieces contain mature themes
reader discretion is advised

our words

water

waves

by J.I. Kleinberg

Five Scenes with Chasms

by Robin Boothroyd

water as in dream

what to speak for

by Nasim Luczaj

He is impervious to rain

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(for Brontë, who was across the river)

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by Ayonija M.

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Bapteesim

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by Karen Douglass

October

Cold Front

Jar & Glass

by Jacy Zhang

There is a Sea

by Anne Kierkegaard

[Dear Readers]

I begin in ice
and water

“and water” - T.S. Eliot

I begin
in

water

Best wishes,

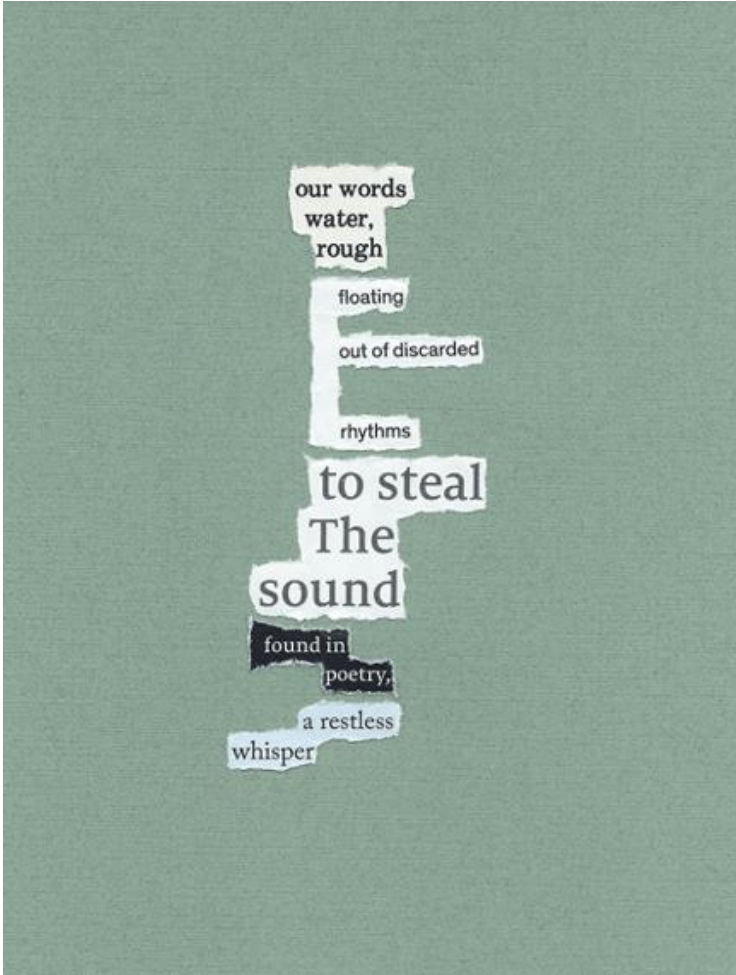
Meredith Grace Thompson
editor :: Edmonton Canada, November 2020

please note ::

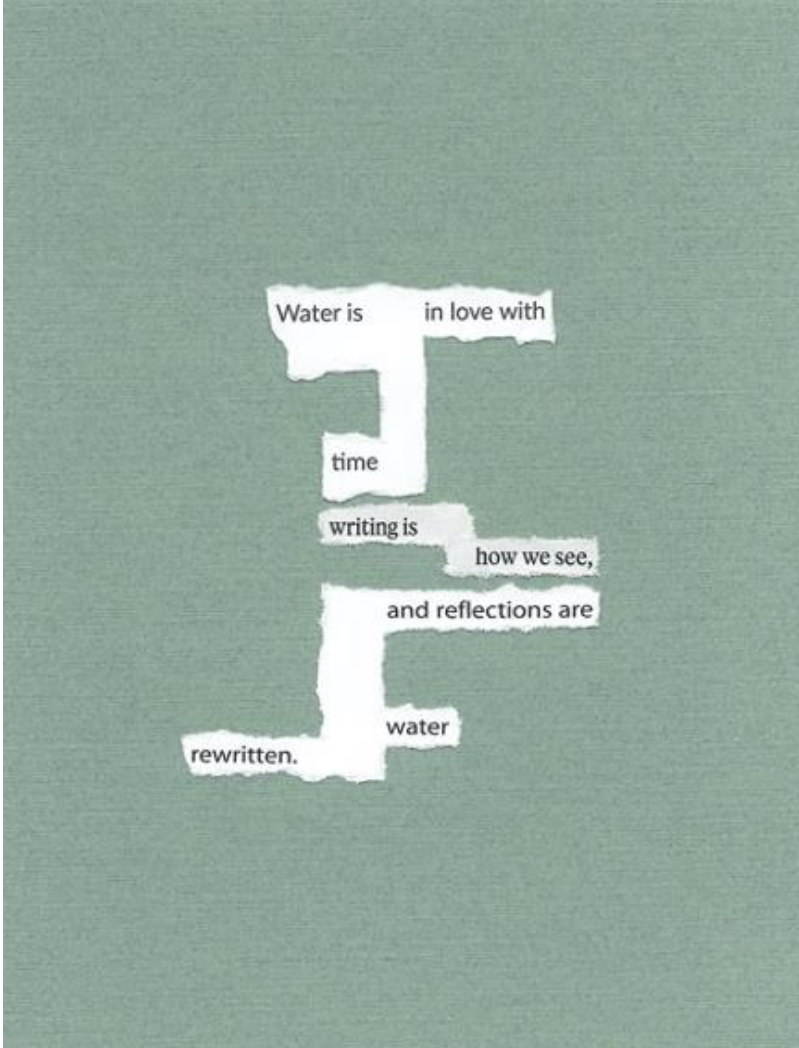
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J.I. KLEINBERG

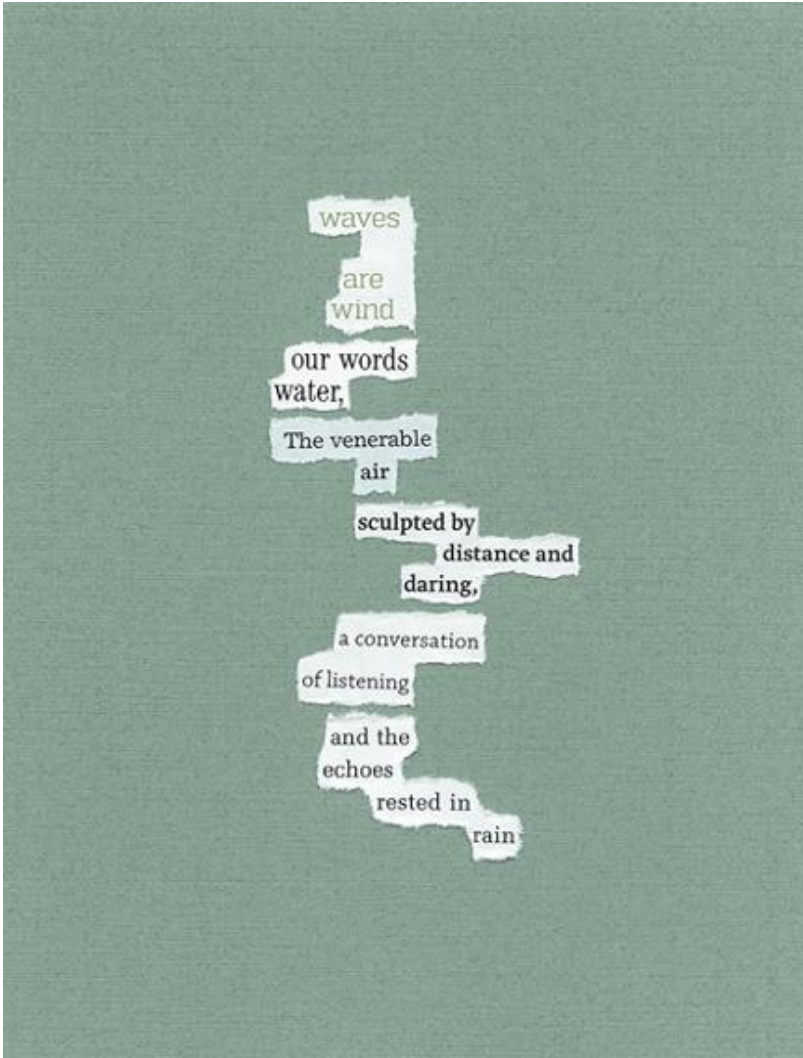
our words



water



waves



ROBIN BOOTHROYD

Five Scenes with Chasms

SCENE ONE

[Monday. Blue's fringe ruffled by cold wind throughout]

Red Take me back to the early days.

Blue Again?

Red Humour me.

Blue I remember, when we first met, you told me your name but I didn't catch it. I was listening to your voice. There was something about it. Something in the tone, the lilt. It was like warm weather. Every time I heard it, I felt like I was on holiday.

SCENE TWO

[Thursday. Red & Blue share a bottle. Two cello notes coming together, drawing apart]

Blue You know I'd do anything for you.

Red I do.

Blue Even kill.

Red Steady on!

Blue I need you to do something for me.

Red Anything.

Blue Bury me within earshot of a waterfall.

Red Don't be ridiculous.

Blue Promise.

Red Okay. [*Swigs*] I promise.

Blue [*Clasps Red like an amulet*]

SCENE THREE

[*Saturday. Rain. Red wrings hands throughout*]

Red Something's wrong.

Yellow In what way?

Red The air around him has changed. [*Pause*] He tastes different.

Yellow Which part of him?

Red Oi! [*Laughs*] It's just that... the other day, he talked about us in the past tense; you know, as though something had changed.

Yellow I'm sure it's nothing.

Red Yeah but he asked me to... [*Chasm*]... I dunno. Maybe he was just drunk.

SCENE FOUR

[Midnight. Scent of cocoa butter]

Red *[Waking]* He's stopped breathing.

SCENE FIVE

[Two weeks later. Ominous silence; chasms]

Yellow She hasn't really spoken since. Except for the howling. It's the anger rather than the grief. Perhaps both. What kind of person doesn't tell... and the waterfall thing - he's lived in London his whole life! We held the wake at the Green Dragon in Wensleydale. It was the best we could do. Open the back door and you can hear Hardraw Force. We walked up there, she & I. The spray films your cheek like mist. What do you call the body of water where a cascade lands? She unclasped her anklet and threw it in.

NASIM LUCZAJ

water as in dream

i sleep with
a waterfall
for a spine
i use it to walk then

dream more bus
sex with slight
accents on the seats
we are not alone

my childhood neighbour is still drinking
with the demented look of an upright well

i half
open my eye
and you are there
like toffee stuck to tooth

i lift
the salt and all
i hear is the entire sea
as it is
clunky in our throat

what to speak for

i keep needing
to stop and tell
you that i need
you to stop
and tell me
that i need to finally
tell you what you've told
me already

that there are out there poppies growing
directly on ice

RACHEL CARNEY

he is impervious to rain

he is impervious to rain bends his head lets it slip from his scalp crouches
into it sideways rain droplets on his glasses squinting through rain he is
impervious the two of us conversing in the rain my words to him like
drops of rain secret thoughts appear as rain two people stood wet in the
rain cold in the rain love turns to torrential rain he is impervious to
rain white eyes of rain sheets of rain rain over us dripping with rain
hope falls as rain departing raised hands drenched in rain too wet to
let go too wet to say what we really mean sorry no we did not know that
it would rain

CHARLES H. LYNCH

Passing Chance of Rain

Since late dinner in dim diner din
felt religiously compelled to execute a poem
about changeable nature entitled to “Untitled”

After watching waiting all night for a sign,
when dawn’s frilly awning cranked
a thought stuck me:
no epiphanies without sound sleep

But fast break breakfast;
through munchless lunch
pretend marathon muse
is at least one attentive audience

So, this odd evening herd word horde,
strive to wrangle companions
for “past custard’s last stand, more rainy moraine”
or worry the lines

mesmerized stymied at sunset/ dusk

by arcking looming arched

sodium vapor light(s) ray,

sere wispy shriveled

elm oak red maple ailanthus leaves

(desiring fall) hang on

I druther hone lonesome gently unbend
take down turns in stride
serene passenger again

Thumb Tony Buzan's *Make the Most of Your Mind*
Tell myself dumb moron jokes crack up
Try twiddling only six toes at once
Practice squeaking chronic yawns

Brain storm came along
I be up inna wind I be gone
crowding clouds, frightnin' lightnin',
peacocking 98% flameproof, baggy pajamas

Inspired, yank living room's steel security gate
Flick glowering ash *hst* onto fire escape
Lean out, alert get wet duck back then jot

tow truck skis boulevard, tires popping hail

church bus caravan strays towards divider

heavens drone winged blinks cross air port Earth

CIARÁN HODGERS

Euripus

The barman's collapse not enough,
this river's slick torrent, solid as marble,
should, I think,
crack me when I land.

Just behind the bend
town makes way for bed.
The only brightness halogen;
streetlamps a string of fairy lights,
taxis pass like slow comets,
the halo of a cradled cigarette
but skywards, the sliced silver scythe of a moon,
stars pulsing in a grievous chorus;
light heavy as pebbles across the water.

You can either move with its force
or against it.
Struggling is a refusal;
floating takes strength,
as does breathing,
swimming upstream,
leaving.

I'm here to prove I have capacity;
that I am a river bed,
that I can hold all of your rapids

and give you some course
but drowning and keeping you
were the same deference
to a metaphor coming undone.

You know how we build muscle?
We scar ourselves into widening
and callus over the gaps.
What strength we would have
if we could only soften.

Surfacing

(for Taryn)

When she told me how you went
I heard a twig snap beneath my foot
like the sound of it was your name now
and I was summoning you to surface
from a sea of trees.

I saw you not as softly spoken
as I had thought you to be,
just drowned out, muffled by a mind
too heavy to float.

The air bubbles rose,
releasing the wreckage prayers of becoming treasure
only to pop and be testimony instead;
to salvage is past tense,
happens after the fact, the crash, the sinking
and by then the shimmer of drowning
showed you something different when you looked up:
the lips of waves beyond the branches,
an oar, a doorway,
the moon an exit sign above.

A reversed rising
they'd already let you down,
by the time you decided to climb.

JESICA DAVIS

Leverage

And maybe
 the state of things,
 the rate of change
depends upon
 steps taken when
 walking across
 Union Square station.

A transfer
 L to
 5 train,
 maybe
 the way home,
 a way to find

 the place each foot
 falls
in space
 dodge another puddle
blots on a white page.

 Typewriter key
 strikes
and fades.
 Decision: made.

But nothing sounds the same
 as the first thirty seconds of rain,
 before pavement
 saturates.

How to Build a Poem from Sticks and Watermusic

1.

At some point [(location/specific)/time] you look down and realize your hand is bleeding, or your foot. An appendage, a part that dangles off. No waterfall, though unburdened arms swing. Hidden from gravity, it has already begun to congeal, this situation you find yourself in.

2.

Water haunts you. We don't get to choose our ghosts. Walk upstairs, check the basement – was the faucet left on? No, but still there is running. Drainage situation inadequate for this deluge. You cannot stop it, this onslaught [memory/(worry/projection)] but you can keep its music company by dancing the story of how you do not sleep.

2.5

~ in-between-light-always-fleeting-always-reaching-through-socket-twists-insides-churn-into-bruise-do-not-look-away-there-is-only-so-long-there-is ~

3.

Leave now. Take a walk, raincoat hood up in anticipation of need but a puddle glance, calm surface says *unnecessary*, says *put it down*, drink the sound around you [(runoff/gutters)/wet-language], best consumed with the shield between removed. You are exposed.

4.

[(West/Jewell Avenue)/(downhill/dusk)] The stream of flash flood remnants, a lessening but steady flow, storm detritus takes a ride until deposited to the side or strained by sewer grate. Gather them, these washed stones and twigs and plastic bullshit and wishes, weave your arms into a basket to bring them home, arrange them on the table, and begin.

ASHLEY D. ESCOBAR

RÊVERIE NO. 3

I.

I congregated hope,
indulging myself in this mildew scented room
overlooking the Danube

Here sits Buda, here sits Pest
I am but a fly, buzzing in the
 dark avenues of your mind, roads without
streetlamps, an alley to defer the present to the
river sharks. they ebb and they flow, flocking
away from the banks, towards the moon.

You still smell the burning sensation
of tanks, of fuel, no longer strength
 something greater than that, transgression or
regression? It would be easier if it weren't up to humanity
to comprehend. Leave it to the lions of the chain bridge, the
tenements with their bullet holes still etched into stone.

How can an empire become overlooked
by way of unintelligible graffiti and the
 landlocked air? There's cleverness in prosperity,
yet life lends itself to the accidental, the unplanned, the
rotten enamel of your tooth. You never eat any sweets,
Mozart asks where you hide your *zauber*, when you'll arrive in
Wien.

II.

Childhood was a sanctuary, a death balloon of no end
until you found yourself, much too late, floating
 over textures of buildings, you once entered and
shadows you once caught with your bare hands.

Language itself is your mother tongue, someday the
word for bread comes faster to you in German
 sometimes it catapults to a Parisian sunset
you have never witnessed, only eavesdropped from Satie.

You declared you would never eat again, once the
war ended. You declared you would waltz alone in
closed quarters. Monday morning
became a recurring threat.

You refused to be the tightrope walker amidst
all these clowns. You washed windows at
 Woolworth's to escape the malady of
another schoolyard. Clever wit for whom to impress?

III.

A bridge must have two sides to remain
intact but if we are both supporting then
 who is playing the lead? Runaway, feel the wind in your face,
see the ocean for the very first time. Idolize Pernod and grey skies.
Look
for hidden kaleidoscopic mutilations--within every windswept
tunnel,
you cross. Think of it as a game of hopscotch.

Think of it as a comedy, a farce, of moving backward
only to be pulled frontwards by playground ropes and
neighbor spit between concrete cracks. Unanchored, you
misplaced
all faith in a fatherland. Homesick for a place you can never return
to, a
place that never was, an earnest longing. Yearning for the sea.

The boats don't rock--they swoon. Half an hour in
an hourglass, twisting and turning, your comfort only
a temporary recluse. The bird she shivers, her shadow overlaps
mine.

I count the tides as if each wave were a measure of time. Fishing is
year-round,
he can reel and he may kneel--this is your deserted seaside town.

Overhead, the pelicans whispering,
you overslept again.

LEONIE ROWLAND

walton-on-thames

for Brontë, who was across the river

it is summer, and we are walking along the river where your favourite writer said the houses are posh / *a three-and-a-half-million riverbank house in walton-on-thames*, but she puts it so beautifully / that you don't mind, even though you campaigned for labour

one of the houses on the other side belonged to kate winslet, who was forced into the water / temporarily for the sake of tragedy, which looks like love when the tides are right / while her boyfriend sank to the bottom of the sea, she thought of walton-on-thames / which she was also separated from by a body of water

if I knew then what I know now / I would have thought of walton as I caught buses on the other side of the river / instead of letting them take me where they were already going

we watched a film where a woman on a boat drops her canvas overboard and follows it in / skirts blooming like flowers, shoes kicking madly / *swans are my favourite*, you say, *because they swim like that* / there are things I would follow in, and from where we are now the river that connects this side and that / is fine because I would have a chance to sink

but there are blackberries here, and you are taking photos / three to capture the narrative: scrambling through thorns / a ripe blackberry, tender hands / it tastes sour, but I smile so that when you are scrolling through your phone / you will understand that I was happy / we pick them thoroughly and do not go / until the heat is gone and it is nearly dark

SASHA SABEN CALLAGHA

That Summer



Limehouse Reach



CONYER CLAYTON

The Annual Visit

My sisters and I go the waterpark. I wrap my phone in my towel as we walk through labyrinths of locker rooms, wade over water-covered staircases, and finally find a seat. A friend from a city I once lived in is sitting across the pool. She is running for office in Morocco. She is beautiful and waving and surrounded by people. I want to take a picture of her, but realize I left my towel and phone at the last wading pools. *We'll stay right here. Go get it*, my sisters say. I am lost for hours. I wander through showers and steam and crashing waves, through fountains and buckets dumping water on children's heads. I've never seen that fountain before. I've never been here, I am lost. I end up outside the building, barefoot in dry grass. I worry about the fire ants and opt to burn my feet on black pavement. A huge train goes by behind me. Each car resembles a parade float, a cartoon, an emoji. I climb a chain-link fence and break into a cross-fit gym. I dodge huge men swinging on bars, ducking between their legs as I hold back tears. I see a woman and ask for help. *Put your wristband on this machine. It will help you*, she instructs me, her hand soft on my shoulder. The machine tells me I owe \$37 for the beer I drank earlier. It asks me why I had that mayo with my fries. Is it a) Because I don't care about sentient creatures, b) Because flavor is more important to me than ethics, or c) Because I am not creative with my spicing? I choose c and begin to cry. The woman asks me why I'm so upset. *Are you supposed to meet them at a certain time? Are you afraid they will leave you?* she asks. *No*, I sob. *I only see them once a year, and I'm wasting it, I'm wasting it.*

AARON SANDBERG

Here Is Another Place

where I can apologize for the water
I tracked through the hall
as I shuffled to the closet
from the shower
when I forgot
my towel.

PAULA BONNELL

Safeconduct

Pins shear, stones drop, the hood of the car
flies up in our faces, metal blocking
the windshield and we are
through the rail and over the side
Oh what a clear view in the headlights
after the rail gives
in our breathless fall - forever
before the splash
only others will hear -
to the unbreathable thickness of water, water
we dreamed we had crossed.

Forearms over the eyes
the badge we wear
when we take these,
the dreams which are bridges,
by which we will reach
morning from night.
They lie down over the dark gap
so we may travel from land to land
without touching the black water
whose chill will leach
what we are from what we seem.

LOLLJUNG

indexing sea[’s] fret[s]

In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up[...]
— Michel Foucault

Turn up that horrible weather!
I’m up for it, I’m
into it!

Do you ever watch
you know, eyes on something,
rain or tears or waves— there’s always water...

a life—walking, sitting, swimming—
imagined as a world, a different space;

~*~

As the old goes, dissipates,
our lives mean nothing
but we, all of us, move, (a hallelujah)
echoes
in remembered spaces—

real seas, and
real stone: memory is at work;

they say to be at sea
is to be lost but what if it’s not?

what if landlocked
is lost in so many ways
it’s difficult to see the wood
for the trees— a chorus
of pines, all needles’ prick
and fir-dripped pleas?

When there
& water right, a flatness inscribed,
child's head turns north:

is land to the left,
a world order.

Cuthbert's island sits cold,
that once brought raiders
led by dragons' heads
off coasts framed
by rock-pocked faces; the bells
wind permitting,
toll there, too.

indifferent to the sea
carved in oak & fir;

~*~

Hymns sung low and humble:
& necks & muscle-hooved
limbs; the sea shifts and
miles of salt-coddled

hot breath
swings
islands old as days.

Close sheep-teeth-cropped
salt-washed *grell-grün* grass;
dry-stacked, moss-licked
placed squat, then
keeping one graze from another;

stone walls
left for later,

weird seaweed green &
troll-tongue blue, darks
& knowing knots;

know

~*~

A boat is given over to
from port to port, tack to tack,
in search of

the infinity of the sea,
the most precious treasure—

a boat is floating
a place without a place
that exists by itself, is

space
closed in on itself.

Here's a boat,
carrying a dead man's body,
dust particles,
waiting patiently
til they are well sunk in grey:

stille Wasser sind tief;

braw, brae wind—
a vision appears—

radio waves of yours
vs. my north sea
two cliffs rise, ancient
faces from ancient

foam—old but

newborn:

a strange, unallowed limbo

KARLA LINN MERRIFIELD

Sea Kisses Triptych

1. Next Day

A kiss at Beaufort
Force Eleven flings itself—
kiss of reckoning.

2. Heavenly

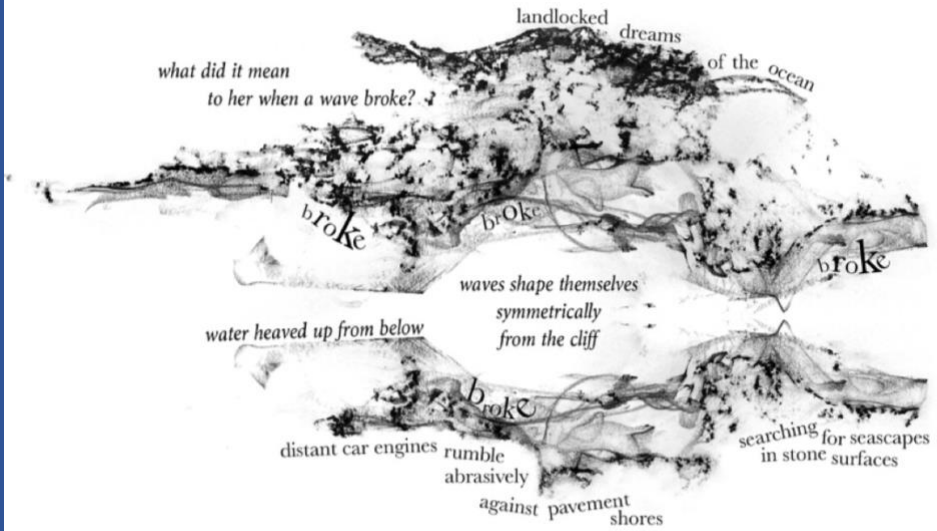
This kiss! How like the sheen
of Jupiter on the sea!

3. Sea Night

This kiss holds some stars
o'er the Indian Ocean;
this kiss is bold.

RACHEL SMITH

Dreams of the Ocean



ALMA SINAN

Float

I did not know it would be like this when I waded into your world. I only intended to get my feet wet. How could I have guessed that you'd be like the tide, rushing up to meet me as quickly as I wandered in?

"I'm not a strong swimmer," I yelled over the noise of the wind and surf.

You laughed and said, "it doesn't matter. Just relax and you'll float."

So I let you lure me in until the water grew deep and I struggled to keep my head above the waves. I drank you in, long deep gulps of you, even though I knew that it would make me feverish and ill. The thirst to know you washed away all reason.

From that first day, when I could still see the shore of my former life, you captured me in your rip current. You brought me gifts; pearls of your wisdom and bits of treasure retrieved from the wrecks of your past. Enchanted by the salty scent of your skin, the perfect shells of your teeth when you smiled and the sharp hook of your poetry and wit, I found myself pulled farther out to sea. I tried to swim parallel to the land, trusting that I'd find my way back to the coast, but it was too late. By the following week, you'd already carried me far away.

How long has it been? Four weeks? Land feels like a dream now and I've almost forgotten my former life. I try to remember the sensation of having solid ground beneath my feet and the certainty of always knowing where I stood; but these memories have been eroded by the persistent waves of your attention.

On windless afternoons, I stare at my reflection in the calm, mirrored surface of the sea. I can hardly recognize myself. Kelp tangles through my hair and my eyes have taken on the turquoise hue of tropical bays. My cold, wet skin is like that of some strange sea creature, puckered with goose bumps. When will I sprout fins and when will my legs finally morph into a fish tail? Sometimes I duck my head beneath the waves and then resurface, enjoying the feeling of heavy droplets caught in the net of my eyelashes. The droplets prism my vision, altering the entire look of the world.

Every day, you encourage me to renounce breath and fully immerse myself in the depths of your world. I want to do so, but I'm frightened that I'll be crushed by weight of this passion. Like this vast ocean, you are my entire world. Even though I resist, I know full well that I'll eventually give in and sink to the sea bed. I find it ironic that the element that will inevitably drown me, is the very thing that buoys me up right now.

You patiently swim beside me, while I float on my back, my face to the sky.

ABHINEET G.

Uncharted Truths



IGOR REYNER

Nine Lessons

I

Water is cliché.

II

A shoal of fish is a stanza.

III

The moon on the lake:
a waning verse.

IV

The night of the water:
the mirror.

V

Unlike the rain,
tears are beads of soul.

VI

I sit down before the sea
and the soil moves

before my salmon-tinted gaze
a brain calcified into coral polyps.

VII

Depth is a platitude:
the unfathomable abyss.

VIII

The fish is the triumph of the water;
the poet, the gill of the world.

IX

Solidity is tragedy.

SAL DRENNAN

The Causeway

Grit ribbon road unspooling faded grey
unseams silver reams of shot-silk water
the causeway pale as daylight drains away;

wide, watchful skies, heather, sand on leather.
I'm slung, hungover, in the jeep's back seat,
Leonard Cohen's Suzanne, laughing chatter,

wet fur pulsing warm by my booted feet.
A new affair flares in front, together,
heads bent, intent, exclusive, indiscreet.

They belong here. I'm just a visitor.
I gaze away, beyond salt-smearred windows
to wild, treeless outside, tarnished mirror

ripples shifting brackish brittle shadows,
and glimpse a girl with ragged fox-red hair,
a thin blue dress, standing in the shallows.

Fingers flutter. Her gull-white feet are bare.
I lurch forward, through their smoky laughter:
"Slow down, stop, she needs a lift, back there."

"From the edge of nowhere?" mocks the driver.
Peat-stained paws scabble, a shrill bark echoes,
hackles rise, but subside to a whimper.

I twist in my seat, blink back at the shallows,
reflected rock shale shivering. Empty.
Close-furrowed clouds, the causeway's frozen flow.

Only now they tell me the local story
of a murdered girl and her restless memory.

BROOKE STANISH

The Salt of the Bridge

Watered stillness along a fisherman's railing
beneath a liquified humanity tossed upon the crags
that remember your face,
but not your name—

the sweetness of anonymity, the sun's breath
thrown over your shoulders as you walk beneath
a bridge with no voice, only an echo of
fishermen you'll never know

& salt sighing
into your face, fills your pores that hold the ocean
in their cradle,
oily & burnt but loving
the turn,
the bend of this inter-pass beneath
a bridge mounted
above the sea.

LUCY MARTIN

Standing on the Edge

Throwing himself into the dawn like a large brass penny the sun gave way to the first light. A giant's hands, cracking an egg wide open into the morning sky. Small lines of light painted the heaven's edges in gold leaf whilst upturned boats lay cumbersome like the bellies of sleeping whales. The heavily salted air of the Hebrides stung my skin and eyes awake after the needed drug of heavy sleep. Rising higher the sun warmed my face, sending a glow across my eyelids creating a kaleidoscopic pattern beneath the lids. A sky full of brass warming a vast Atlantic ocean of silver. I stood alone on the edge of a timeless sea. Like an old friend, lapping at my feet, her ebb and flow endlessly turning back to greet me.

I have always lived on the coast. Which, good or bad has created some kind of addiction to it. A restlessness of the soul with the constant coming and going of the tide. Unsettled. A heavy yearning drawing me back to her again and again like the painful infatuation of a first lover. Holding both a shallowness of the heart and depth of the imagination that will deceive and consume you whole. Both friend and foe. Heaven and hell. Life and death.

The haar blanketing the water's surface was burning away leaving only a light sea mist in its wake. A small fishing boat trailed the oceans ceiling, navigating its way cutting through the water like a pair of scissors in the steady guiding hand of a seamstress. I longed to be on that boat. Heading out into a nothingness. Reaching out for the unreachable line of water meeting sky. Blue bleeding into blue. Heaven meeting earth. Guiding my hand along the horizon I imagined a seam, a stitch binding the edges of a quilt. An earth etched in a braille for me to trace and read. All at once I had the urge to plunge myself into the minty coolness of the peppermint waters. Breaking the oceans ceiling. Gasping for breath. Until reaching the horizon, I would unpick the earth's

seams and climb out. Or maybe diving deep I would wrap myself in the dark ribbons of wavering seaweed and stay there. Wrapped tightly into the inky blackness like a dormant seed shielding for the spring. A salty balm. A peppermint shock. Healing, always healing.

It is the sheer restlessness of the ocean that I yearn for. As if calling out to my own restlessness she thirsts for mutual friendship. Drenching me with a peace that floods and absorbs into the skin through osmosis. The extreme and unapologetic nature in which she performs and changes her mind pulls me close to the edge. I like extremes. Always have done. Living on the edge of the Atlantic is one of those extremes. Like living on the edge of the world. Where the wind blows so strong it could whip you into the sea if you weren't holding on. Sometimes it does. They get swept away into the depths and the coastguard is phoned, and the people say 'It's dangerous on the edge', 'Too close to the edge was she'. The Hebrides where the wind screams through the island like a woman gone mad. Where the sea turns a strange transparency of silver and blue, an alcoholic elixir of salt meeting peat meeting whiskey. The Hebrides where the day's papers don't make it onto the boat and passive aggressive sheep man the roads like a wollen mafia. Where the smoke of peat streams though the air like incense mixing into the elixir of the angels-share. Unapologetic landscapes wrapped within the confines of an unapologetic sea. The Hebrides. The creator of hardy people and even harder wildlife. Dark blotches of rock and peat struck down into opal and topaz waters. As if by the heavy handed jaw of a giant the earth was chewed up and spat back out again.

The tide now high and still, drowned the ribboning seaweed creating inky blotches at my feet. A seal, huffing out an exaggerated breath, hauled itself out of the water and shining, draped itself over the harsh black rock before singing out for a mate. A halcyon calmness laid the water flat. As if exhausted she had decided the midnight oil was burned and she would now lie down to rest. She wouldn't last though. For as beautiful as she is I have come to know the ocean

is as fickle. It would not be long, I thought, opening my eyes to the warmth of a strengthening sun. It would not be long before enraged she would arch and crash. Grabbing at the land's seams, unpicking the earth until he fell away back into her. Loud and disorderly like a drunk, unaccepting of the midnight bell. Frightening and powerful. Contorting her face in anger and clutching whatever she'd been left within her grasp to hurl and throw back onto the land. Beautiful and extreme. Swinging in the balance of the two.

The fishing boat was now but a mark. A small mustard seed of faith upon a weaving of iridescent thread. A careless smudge of charcoal on the artist's ready canvas. I wondered what the fisherman was thinking. Was he like me? Addicted to teetering on the edge. Adventuring to find the end seam. Yearning, always yearning to fall off into the blue. Or maybe it was simpler than that and he wanted solely to catch the day's daily bread. A gannet took my eye like a bright star. An arrow falling fast and free from the heavens before striking the oceans eye with unmeasurable precision. I traced him gently bobbing back, up out of the inky depths empty mouthed. I stood for a long time watching him, feeling in some way connected to his unending efforts. Again and again and again. Mastering a skill for survival. For aren't we all? Connected I mean. Plunging ourselves into the world's waters to see what we can find to fill us? Are we not all like the gannets wings dipped into the night rising up into the mornings sun. Coming up time and time again empty handed until maturity and practice helps us hit the bullseye. Like small smudges upon the waters of life, sailing into the distance of an unreachable line. Standing, on the edge of the world.

SHIRLEY NICHOLSON

September Sea, South Harbour, Fair Isle

I thread bands of turquoise
a blue dark as midnight
and roar and roar
from my lion throat
throw spume on these rocks
play games with the shag
that fly away
from their sentinel watch
I storm and bluster
I roll and roll
batter these cliffs
hurl myself
at obstinate rocks
I'll never give up
I leap and jump
clear each skerry
make a spray fountain
that splatters and stutters
like a writhing snake
I curl and twist -
a fearsome creature
I foam and froth -
what treasures I hide
great shoals of fish
and shipwrecks -
a Viking longboat
the *Canadia* even

the flagship *El Gran Grifon*
from the Armada how close
I held the cries the tears -
in a welter of waves
I'll make another rush
for the pebbled shore
where sheep munch kelp
dangling in ribbons
from their mouths
this island is mine
held in my hands I shine
these rocks till
they gleam like metal
sparkle like jet
and the grey seals -
their cannon ball heads -
cannot outshine
the lustre
this ink black wetness
in luminous light

RIVER ELLEN MACASKILL

Birdlife of British Columbia

why do I feel bad for a mosquito drowning in wax by the wick of a candle I lit
to keep it away?

it's healthy to be surrounded by more animals than human persons

I sit with the chickens feeding them kale for twenty minutes and prefer them to
my own family

osprey eagle heron blue-jay woodpecker hummingbird robin

upwards from the pile of birdshit on the doormat hangs a swallows' mud-nest
stuck to the wood panels by sheer force of will. the blue and amber shining birds
become accustomed to us. their eggs hatch and sharp beaks open and close like
monstrous flytraps

what makes the mother swallow chirp at me when she catches me watching

will they tend to her in old age? build her a hospice nest? I don't understand it

it is not for me to understand. it's fine

after a heavy-bitten night I awake to a spider in the window trapping a fly,
wrapping it up between all of its hot spidery legs until the buzzing goes out

thank you, I tell the arachnid guardian, but she does not care

in the sea of a warm evening the dog follows me playing the role of seal. we wade
out into the oncoming tide

I pick my way through seaweed and barnacles on guard for whatever lurks
beneath my heavy feet

bite me to remind me of your power on unceded, occupied, and stolen land

I love to see the heron shit in swooping ribbons cascading downwards as it takes
it ridiculous wings up to the trees, legs dangling like an afterthought

Google: are herons heterosexual flamingos

the woods at night hung in shadow full of no one tempt me inwards an opening
into a hundred horror stories

about people who do not want to be spat back out

and will never be seen again

I desire to know where they go and so we keep following each other in

curiosity kills and the world overwhelms but trees subdue,

silent and menacing like an elder you struggle to trust

indoors at night I dream of being fucked under the moon on a bed of moss,

nipples stone from the cold damp air, orgasm echoing between mountain walls

dirt from the island sticks under my fingernails all the way back to the mainland

where I will keep it until I return to submit my body to the birds and the bees,

the hills and the sea

for now I drift off to a mosquito's lullaby and scratch until I bleed.

BETH KILKENNY

Amphitrite in neoprene

and the water, almost, forest green

the tide was low

my face submerged

I a crawl as as

swam jagged out far him.

Lifting my face , lifting my face, gasping for life against the icy deep.

Underneath

seaweed,

tiny shimmering fish,

algae, tang, grass,

me - (Amphitrite in black neoprene and goggles).

Down

Down

Down my face

Down into gaping midnight ink.

I propel with heart shaped waves, to tell her I am coming.

She opens wide - a welcome - and swallows me whole.

Whale (in love.)

He said the animal may have suffered an acoustic trauma,

(I read online, about this whale , trapped in a local harbour,)

which led to him losing the ability to navigate,

(it seemed to me poetic, in that it was about loss)

getting lost along the east coast.

(and death.)

He said such an injury would also mean the whale would not be able

(When you said you loved me)

to feed and would lose weight.

(it seemed to me poetic)

He said the animal will be stranded when the tide goes out,

(in that it was about loss)

and should be left to die.

(and death - , of a sort.)

ROSA ALBA MACDONALD

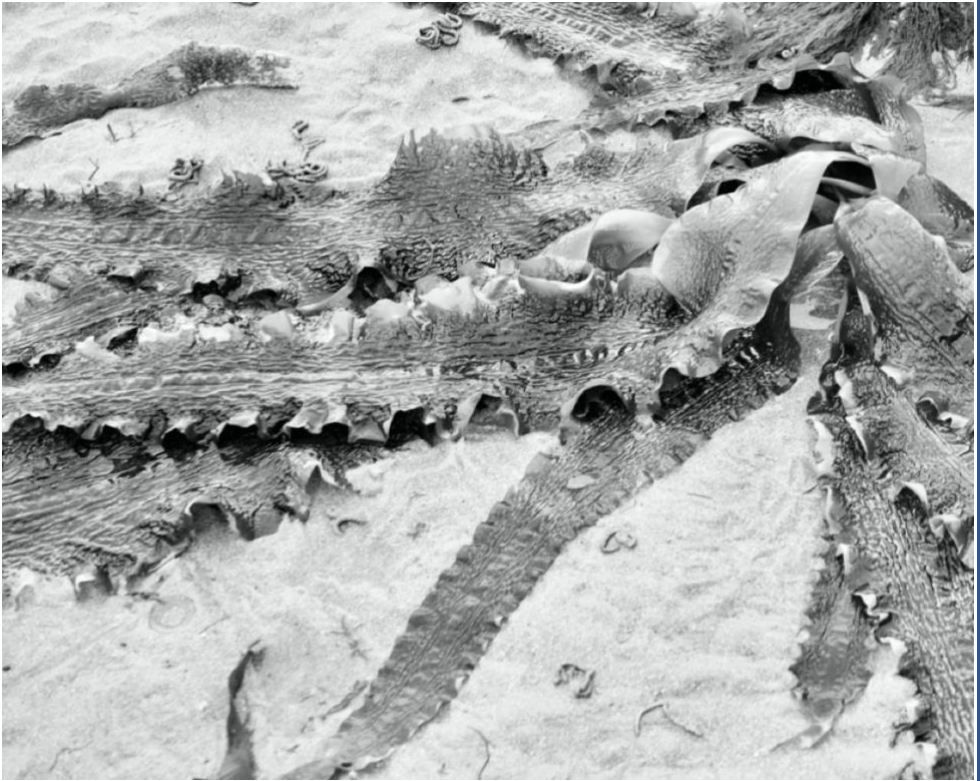
Sands of Tides Run



Shore Life - Evening Low Tide



Tidal Reaches, Touching Out



MARIANNE BREMS

Bathing Suit

A required layer between water and skin,
though colourful,
has but one modest hope—
to apply decorum to persistent nakedness.

No power of its own,
it lives from adventures of else.
Lifeless seams stretch and subside,
bulge and shrink,
only as oxygenation rages,
muscles contract,
blood surges,
skin flexes
to move a body forward
through water rushing past
folding then folding over itself.

This luckless fabric
of reds and yellows,
or greens and blues,
tolerating subservience,
subsists as a graceless spectator
of insignificant proportion.

LAURINDA LIND

Beach and Sky

Paintings by Emily Carr

Only the edge of its face
sleeps against the shore
as the sea leans on it all summer,
won't slide the panes of its smooth
palms over the heated hills.

Lying low is enough for now,
an ocean a good eyeful though
jealous of its own jewelry which is the twisted
wood left over from walking a flood
up over the floor.

You could wish the arms of the air
would find you. You'd hope
you'd still feel them.

MARK RUSSELL

#72: Marks

The undergrowth is soft with occasional twigs. Light through the trees comes from my left. It's fresh, like morning. I must be walking south. There are wires. Why are there wires in my arm, my wrist? My pulse is fast. I hear a mechanical noise. A beat. I'm beating. I'm tapping out a message. I'm furious. About what? My pace quickens. Now it's humid. Please don't let there be a shack at the end of the track. There's a shack at the end of the track. I run. My feet are heavy. I can't move. Run, the voice says. I'm trying but the shack's getting closer. The shack has a jacuzzi. Mrs Johnson is in the jacuzzi. I want to talk to you, she says. About what? About your essay on Lord of the Flies. Get in. She hands me my jotter and slides under the water. There are red marks all over the essay. When she surfaces, she has popcorn and root beer. Want some? We swap. You'll never get into Oxford writing rubbish like this. She slides under again. I count to thirty and slide under myself. I count to sixty. One hundred and eighty. My jotter drifts across my eyeline. The words have slipped. Three hundred. I turn a page. All the corrections are a mess.

OMALA ZUTSHI OPUBOR

Insignificance

We used to take a walk along the beach every morning
We felt the sand touch our bare feet, as we breathed in the salty air
We shared a bag of chips that your mum gave us
So we wouldn't get hungry

And every morning
When we were done
We'd throw the bag
Watch it fly like a parachute
Then land
In the blue water

It was a few years later
that the government banned the catching of fish
There were barely any left

No more fish caught
Meant no more fish eaten
There were riots
People went mad

It was also at this time
That we had the strongest heatwave we'll hopefully ever have
And the worst drought
Jobs were lost, lives were lost
The world had changed

Hungry people banded together
They ransacked stores

And houses
So they wouldn't be hungry anymore
My house, included
I don't blame them, though

We passed the sidewalks
And saw sick, crying children on the street
They looked weakly at us
And we felt helpless

We passed the ocean
And saw fish floating belly-up
With glazed eyes
The same eyes those crying children would have soon

But even after all that,
It only hit me that the world had changed
When my favourite chip company went out of business

It's not an excuse
But at the time
We didn't understand
The significance
Of something so insignificant
Like seeing a little plastic bag
Drift through the air
Then land gently
In the deep, majestic ocean

AYONJA M.

[untitled]

From water, we evolve
In water, our ashes dissolve
We pray to water as if a god
But still pollute it, isn't that odd?

REINA U.

Autobiography of the river 'Rishi Ganga'

The first thing I ever saw was the sun kissing the tip of the Nanda Devi. And my journey began from there. I flowed down the snow-capped mountains, awed by the sights I saw. In a few months, I learnt that I was the source of life for everyone. At the break of dawn, old Pandits would come and dip themselves in my waters chanting mantras while I bowed respectfully before them. There were little children who would splash in my water while their mothers would squat in ankle deep waters, washing their clothes. Then there were old men who would come and drink my water after their strenuous work. But everybody treated me with reverence.

I realised I was a part of one of their most holy rivers, the Ganga. My waters were pure and holy. There were all these small tributaries which would come and join me. But I hated a few of them. They were dirty and garbage filled. I didn't like that they would come and join my clean waters. So, I used to tease them and not let them come and dirty my waters.

One day I saw an extremely muddy and impure tributary. I started teasing him in the hope that my waters wouldn't become dirty. That tributary became angry and shouted this at me, "You conceited river! You'll learn soon. You are anyways headed towards the city where you will reach the sewage and become much dirtier than me also!" I was flabbergasted but I still said, "I will never ever become as dirty as you!" Saying this, I continued on my journey. And one day, I reached my ever-awaited dream. The city. It was beautiful. This was way better than the mountains I had previously lived in. Even if there wasn't much space in the city, it at least prevented the tributaries from coming and joining my waters. I roamed about happily taking in the sights I saw. I may not have been treated as well as I was in the mountains but I still had prestige over here.

As I went about more and more, people started treating me badly. They threw cans, plastic bottles and many other things into me. Months and months rolled by and I became more and more polluted with all sorts of rubbish. And I asked myself, "Was this the life I longed for?" Much later in my life, I came across that old tributary. It grinned when it saw me. "So", it said. "You are much dirtier than me, just like I said." I looked ashamed, knowing that I couldn't argue that. Seeing my face, it softened. "Well old chap, I am sorry about you. But I can't give you anything but bad news. You are heading for the sewage." I looked up, wide-eyed when I heard the last word. I prayed and prayed to the Gods that I wouldn't have to go there. But my nose had already picked up the stench of the dreaded place. Soon, I could see the grills of the drain. I couldn't even imagine what all was floating about in it. Slowly, my waters started seeping into the spaces between the grills. I could do nothing but helplessly stare in horror. To save my eyes from seeing the sights I saw, I closed them. And when I did, I saw the sun kissing the peak of the Nanda Devi.

EVELINE PYE

Bapteesim

A hale frae a canny place
whaur thi curve o thi Clyde
grazes yon canal frae thi east,
a place o rain, burns an streams,
passages tae the hail world,
whaur ships wir built, an fowk
wid leave an come back hame
wi stories o far-flung countries,
syle, dry as dust, scorchin sun,
no a scuff o rain fir half a year.
Puir souls must've been sweltered,
mangin fir mornin mist, saft days
- no ower hot, no ower cauld -
the calmin sound o watter fallin,
cleanin thi God-fearin streets,
washin awa aw oor sins.

whaur : where *burns* : brooks *syle* : soil

mangin : longing *ower* : too

HERSHIKA G.

Water

Water falling from the sky
Large round drops
Speeding towards the ground
Drenching the grass
Drenching the trees
Drenching a little kid
Drenching a cat
Maybe they don't come as water
Maybe as snow
Creating a white wonderland
Or a crazy blizzard
Maybe they don't come as snow
Maybe as ice
Little bits of hail
Or as big as tennis balls
Water falling from the sky
Little tiny drops
Slowly falling down
Onto a car
Onto a tree
Onto an umbrella
Onto a soil
Rain

MARY B. KURTZ

Dendrites and Stars

I make it a practice to walk, hike or bike each day. The habit is an old one. I grew up with forty-six other children on a subdivision block we called 21st Street. Most anytime I walked out the front door, I found friends eager to play. In the unencumbered time and space, my sense of self in relationship to the outside world settled in and with it, a deep sense of well-being.

Now in my sixties, I can't wait to open the front door and head out. In good weather I often ride my bike along the North Fork of the Elk River in rural North Routt County. The paved road is called Seed House Road and passes by small, residential properties, often with horses in an adjoining pasture, or some part-time homes, like Grandma's Cabin tucked away in the pine and aspen near the river.

My ride begins easily into the shade of aspens where the air cools and sections of the North Fork of the Elk stretch out below the road. I eagerly follow its wind. As the road opens, the snowcapped divide on the horizon appears with sightings of Little Agnes and Big Agnes, Dome Peak, and the highest pinnacle, Mount Zirkel, at 12,180 feet, where summer may last six weeks to eight weeks depending upon the season.

There at the headwaters of the North Fork, the wilderness consists of a diverse ecosystem from sagebrush meadows in the lower areas, through pine and spruce/fir forests and on up to alpine tundra. Further on, where I eventually circle and turn around for my return ride home, the asphalt gives

way to gravel and those seeking hiking trails, fishing, and high mountain lakes drive further on to the Slavonia Trailhead, to access the wilderness areas in the Park Range and Sierra Madre of the Continental Divide.

As I pedal, I'm always intrigued with the lap of the river, its speed, and its flow. I contemplate the dynamic transformation of the waterway, from snow crystal to water droplet to roiling river in April, May and June. I envision in the ambitious, headlong runoff, the geo-metrical elements once possessed by those crystals: needles, plates and columns capped with dendrites and stars. High above in the deep snowpack, they now ease, relax, and let go of their organization and structure, becoming fluid, merging with all the other remnants of winter storms and silent nights.

I later learn the pace of the transformation is determined by overnight temperatures and the radiation from the sun. Heat converts the snow particles into water and gravity pulls the water to the ground. Then over granite, roots, moss and old soil it flows where resistance is least, into the shade and shadow of aspen lined creeks like Hinman Creek, which joins Lester Creek, Colton Creek and Willow Creek from the Hahn's Peak Basin to become the North Fork.

On down the road I cross Colton Creek and pass by the guest ranch where an old gardening friend grew lettuce, rhubarb, and tomatoes at an elevation of 8000 feet. In another half-mile, it's Johnny Snyder's place, a small spot filled with an old square-log home he built and chinked himself, the smoke from his woodstove often drifting up and away over the North Fork.

In 1960, Johnny came to the valley from Pennsylvania in a 1938 blue Pontiac pick-up. No one knows why. Described as a hard worker, a self-starter, he hired out first as a ranch hand and then as a woodsman, working the forests for logs and firewood. He, at one time, raised mink, the abandoned cages still intact near his house.

Late this past summer, Johnny carefully walked up the ramp to the local Clark Store. I've known of him for forty years. That morning, I thought, surely he's in his eighties. A friend told me he saw him that day, too. Johnny told him, "I've got the cancer." A month later, neighbors found Johnny dead of a heart attack near the kitchen sink. Even though I had concluded that his reclusive heart had found a home embedded in the woods and the land, I was saddened by Johnny dying alone.

Where the pavement ends and the gravel begins, I loop around a small parking lot, stop, and unclip my shoes. To the east, I assess the melt on the divide, watching for the last of winter's remains; and then back to the west, Sand Mountain stands near my point of return. A small meadow neighbors my resting spot and in the still and quiet of the open land and high divide, I find a persistent peace.

In the respite, I often consider the metamorphosis of those columns, plates, dendrites and stars from crystalline form to water drop, roiling river and back again to winter's crystals. I ask myself, what similar transmutation do I understand as I stand bound to this earthly life. I can only relate to one transformation - from a spirit conceived, physically embodied, and born into the world. And then upon death, a complete change of form: the embodiment, the physical presence transformed back to spirit, just as

crystalline forms melt to water drops and roiling river and back again to winter snows on the divide.

Recently, I recalled the time before my granddaughter was born, when she didn't exist in a physical form. Then I fast forward and she's wiggling in my arms and tracking me with her eyes, both her body and sweet spirit embedded in my life. Was her spirit traveling the world before it was captured to be here on earth in the natural world?

When I work at answering this question, I often think of my late mother. My kitchen window frames a view of the wilderness area near the North Fork. As I wash dishes, I imagine my mother's spirit sailing there on the wind and wonder, if I try sailing with her will we know one another again. I don't know. But I'll keep asking each time I ride along the North Fork feeling the wash of the wave of the waterway just below Seed House Road.

KATIE SIMPSON

Wednesday

Wee blue tit flits
and clings like spiderman,
wind rages and abates,
unmoved, he rests.

Spring rain idles
as sun and cloud take their turns,
unrehearsed perfection,
they paint the sky.

Clean and gleaming,
mud flats loll and grow fat,
so absorbed and in love
with their mud-ness.

The immortal river
leaves us for seas seldom seen
but promises to return.
It keeps good time.

Here in our path,
blackbird loafs in a puddle,
relishing freshness and ease
amongst the mud.

KAREN DOUGLASS

The Ego of the Marsh

Too long I've been a spring tide
climbing the shore, clawing my way
inland to solid ground. The marsh,

a place of much grass, listens, says
little, but notes the distant pressure
of the sea's tidal rise and murmurs

a school of words. Small and shining
they cohere one moment, and flash
away the next, through art deco curves

of open water and floating carpets
of velvet grass, a temperate zone
between river and sea, unlike me,

open minded to glossy ibis and mink,
deer, heron, black duck and muskrat—
neither hard earth nor pounding surf.

JACYZHANG

October



Cold Front



Jar & Glass



ANNE KIERKEGAARD

There is a Sea

mermaids with heartache |

The time I have spent on checking the weather report and my horoscope must, all in all, amount to a couple of years of my life by now. The weather report and horoscope checking took place with higher frequency in some periods (when at obsessive rates of several times a day it correlated with depressive episodes which always felt much like struggling through water), but the need to check in with the solar system and atmospheric conditions in order to decide on things like which colour of t-shirt to wear has been a constant.

(Today, 6 July, it is 16 degrees with rain showers. I am surprised to find that people are wearing summer clothes here, and surprised that whenever the sun peeks out, it is too warm to wear a jacket. It is humid and windy. The wind makes the leaves on the big tree in the neighbouring backyard look like waves on a green sea stuck between grey brick-stone walls.)

Already as a child my zodiac was important to me. Only, there had been a slight misunderstanding: Maybe because I loved fairy tales and was fascinated with the fairy tale of *The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen, I was sure I was a Mermaid, not a Virgo (in Danish, my native language, the words are *Havfrue* and *Jomfru*—easy to confuse, if you want to). When I at some point was able to read my own horoscope and couldn't find the Mermaid, I experienced what I suppose was my first identity crises. It is the sort of pain that most grown-ups cannot understand or take seriously: the pain and grief of the loss of your mermaid self.

The fairy tale of the *Little Mermaid* in its original version is rather sad and disturbing. In the end, the mermaid does not get the prince (who until then has kept her as a kind of dancing pet) but dissolves into sea foam. What

especially struck me was the pain she had to go through to turn her fish tail into legs (she felt every step like walking on knives). Still, she did it, to marry a human prince, and through that marriage gain an eternal human soul. But instead of being rewarded for her sacrifice, she dies of heartbreak. How romantic and cruel. Hardly a story to model your budding identity on.

Apart from H.C. Andersen fairy tales, I, like many other Danish children, also read Peter Madsen's Valhalla comics (showing the full cast of gods, all as highly fallible, comical, and less than god-like characters), and loved them. In my naivete, it wasn't until I travelled in Germany that I realised to what extent Norse mythology and the idea of Scandinavia was aesthetically ingrained in Nazi ideology. It led me to the conclusion that I had to review my fascination with astrology, weather, romantic fairy tales, and mythology, all in one pack; with the fact that I seem to have an affinity for banal mysticism.

Romanticism, I came to understand, is the shadow-side of enlightenment and of democracy. It is the mythic past, the emo-national; a fertile soil for cultivating nationalism and its irrational pride and xenophobia. It is the perfect narrative for deciding who "the right people" are. But because I couldn't rid myself of my childhood infatuation with Valhalla and fairy tales, I really wanted these stories to offer something that didn't have to do with an invented mythic past, foundational for Nordic and national pride. And I wanted to understand why, when the little mermaid wanted so badly to be a human, did I want to be a mermaid?

the water desert

The German romantic painter Casper David Friedrich created several paintings featuring centrally placed characters with their back turned to the spectator, looking (together with the spectator) out over a seascape. The most spectacular and famous of these paintings is *Der Mönch am Meer* (The Monk by the Sea). The monk stands alone in front of an ominous sea, a great nothingness that instead of awakening the romantic, painful longing to be part

of something bigger, more beautiful and eternal, mostly just confronts the spectator with herself.

In a disputed review of the painting, Clemens Brentano and Heinrich von Kleist wrote: “Nothing could be sadder or more discomfited than just this position in the world: the single spark of life in the vast realms of death, the lonely center in the lonely circle.”

Personally, however, I find the painting elevating. Apparently so did Adolf Hitler, who was a big fan of Casper David Friedrich. On the Tate’s website it says about the painting that “the core meaning of Friedrich’s paintings lies in the viewer’s own interpretation, and there is nothing in them that does not already exist in the viewer’s heart and mind.[i]”

Which sounds like the “mirror of Erised” in Harry Potter (which shows the deepest desire of one’s heart), and the question arises: What did Hitler see in there? What reflection did the romantic sea cast back?

I wonder, because to me, the painting expresses a longing for belonging.

Mönch am Meer (along with other works of romantic art, like Beethoven’s symphonies) is often seen as aestheticization of Kant’s ideas on the sublime: The sublime nature that elevates us through its immenseness by mirroring the inner immenseness of our humanity; an experience that is not caused by beauty as such, but by awe[ji]. The sea that the monk is looking at is frightening rather than beautiful. Uncanny, but not evil. Powerful and strange.

(This evening I go for a walk. Looking out on the weather from the inside, it seems stable in its greyness, a little cold. It will require a rain jacket. I forgot to pack mine but have borrowed one from my mom. As I walk around the lakes in Copenhagen, I zip up the jacket, then unzip, take it off, take of my thin sweater underneath, then I put it all back on when it starts raining again. But I start sweating under it all the moment the sun comes out 10 minutes later. I

forgot the degree to which the weather is constantly changing here. No one else—the walkers, drinkers, joggers, talkers, pram strollers—seem to mind.)

What is the connection between the lonely romantic wanderer, the misunderstood genius with her *Weltschmerz* on one side, and the longing for a nation on the other; to belong with the best and the most perfect of people: the sublime nation? Is it just the need to belong, filtered through a narcissist inclination?

The way romanticism worships myths and the past, mermaids and thunder gods, and the way romanticism in turn is instrumental to nationalism reminds me of what Joseph Campbell writes about myths: on one side they express a universal humanity, because such myths exist in every culture, on the other side, they're always dangerous when taken at face-value and understood to express the superior uniqueness of one particular culture[iiii].

Does romantic art express the longing for home caused by the forgetting of Being, as Heidegger[iv] (who, among other things, was a Nazi) called it?—That we have an uncanny, *unheimlich*, feeling stirring in our gut, coming from the fact that we, in order to live a normal everyday life, have to suppress that we (or, most people) haven't understood the first thing about Being (like, what is the purpose of our existence?). A state that holds great potential for anxiety.

Like Norse mythology and romantic art, Heidegger's philosophy was used in the Nazi project, where his ideas about authentic Being were translated into the Being of the Authentic People—an elusive polis. Again, I come to think of the little mermaid, who decides that there is no means not worthy of the goal: to be a real human with a divine soul. To belong, in other words. To escape the (perceived) inferior realm of nature, of otherness, by transcending it and rising above.

liquid bodies, water souls

Usually, little mermaids turn into seafoam when they die, we understand from H.C. Andersen's fairy tale. To me, that seems less frightening than a mutilating process of turning a fish tail into human legs, losing your voice, and sacrificing your life for a person who patronises you. I wonder if H.C. Andersen didn't feel the same way, spending most of his life, as it were, at the periphery of the bourgeoisie, always on the border to that otherness that so many of his stories circle around. If anything, the mermaid turning into seafoam is a perfectly poetic idea of returning home, of again becoming one with that nature that we, romantic individuals, have been so painfully severed from. I'd choose seafoam any time: For you are water and to water you shall return?

The idea of being water is also one the hydro-feminist Astrida Neimanis contemplates: "Even while in constant motion, water is also a planetary archive of meaning and matter. To drink a glass of water is to ingest the ghosts of bodies that haunt the water." [v] This essay, *On Becoming a Body of Water*, has a mystical quality that reminds me of Romanticism in the way it describes both a connection and disconnection between humans and nature. Similar to the ideas set forth in the book *Hypersea: Life on the Land* [vi] (that all living beings on land carry a remnant of the ocean in their tissue, and that this strategy is what enabled life on land) it is an interesting intersection between metaphysics and biology.

I've been mesmerized by the ideas of hydro-feminism for a while and have come to think of it as eco-feminist romanticism, where water is a symbol for our relation to the planet, each other, and ourselves. One that focuses on connectedness rather than loneliness and doesn't differ between body and soul. The watery body invites nature inside, as close as it gets. It invites us all inside everything, and everything inside us.

It makes me think of the sci-fi classic *Dune*, where when someone dies their tribe inherits their water, literally. Such a ceremony makes sense in a world where there is no room for disconnect, only for adaptation to the environment. But in this world, body fluids are taboo – they are waste, to be flushed out into the sea, into the great oblivion of “nature”. In turn, however, following Neimanis’s water logic, it is all flushed out into ourselves. We inherit the water of previous generations whether we like it or not.

With the idea of the watery body, Neimanis offers an aesthetic idea that does not confine our bodies to clay, dust, cultural or biological functions: The symbol of water offers a perspective on Being, where interconnectedness is the a priori, rather than authenticity. And for me, thinking this way leads to a deep sense of fulfilment, because the most obvious conclusion I can think of, is that, in a sense, all humans already are mermaids—of the hypersea: We all already belong.

(On Monday, 3 August, we take the ferry from Gedser. The sun is fresh and clear. The ferry arrives in Rostock, and we leave the coast for a swampier inland; Berlin melting in sudden heat with electric rains around the corner.)

[i] <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-14-autumn-2008/whispering-zeitgeist>

[ii] P. 1265-1272. Jensen, Hans Siggard et al. (eds.) 2006: *Revolution og Romantik 1789-1857 in Tankens Magt - Vestens Idehistorie, Lindhardt & Ringhof, København*

[iii] P. 213. Campbell, Joseph 2008: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 3rd Ed. New World Library, Novato, California

[iv] Thyssen, Ole 2012: *Martin Heidegger, Værens Blik in Det Filosofiske Blik* (Informations Forlag)

[v] Neimanis, Astrida 2012: “Hydrofeminism; Or, on Becoming a body of Water” in *Undutiful Daughters: Mobilizing Future Concepts, Bodies, Subjectivities in Feminist Thought and Practice*, eds. Henriette Gunkel, Chrysanhi Niganni and Fanny Söderbäck.

[vi] McMenamin, Mark and McMenamin, Diana (1994). *Hypersea: Life on the Land*, Columbia University Press.

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