

The Ocean Came to Us

No beach lies along that shoreline. Yet, the sounds of the ocean would not leave us alone throughout the night. Repeatedly, its waves dove in percussive cadence against rocks it could never churn into sand, so the clashing of their bodies sounded as loud and passionate as lovers in the hungry, wet darkness.

The morning after, we strolled upon a walkway built just in front of the rock shore, the sun still a bit cool though you strode all the way in bare feet. We held hands during the entire lazy route to no place and back.

I remember making love to you the night before for the first time, falling asleep as we held one another, then waking up alone. I saw you sitting on the patio, still as the moon you were watching. It was 4:02 and the salt drifted inside the hotel room as I watched your silhouette. Neither of us moved as the ocean sang the same hypnotic melody it has offered to lovers since well before Sappho wrote that love is the captive of desire.

I wondered what you were feeling, and which thoughts were keeping you attentive to the talking waves, the silent stars, and the moonlight which bobbed upon the ocean

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like a sailboat adrift in pleasure.

That was seven years ago.
This morning, I awoke with
our legs entangled and the
smell of your lush hair filling
my nose with its bouquet.
We live eight thousand miles
from that ocean, but it has not
left you, nor have the mountains
that rested behind us, looking far
beyond the coastline to places
where the horizon divides the
blue of the sea from the sky's
bright azure with a line neither
has ever been able to cross.

You gave yourself to me that
evening and I devoured every taste
of you, wanting so much to find
my dreams calling your name.
I knew that what you were sharing
quietly with the moon and the sea
were secrets the ancient water
would never reveal to me, though
I was content to know just the you
that you wanted me to see.
Each of us endures passing through
places from which we leave
scarred, insecure, and hollow.
But for the names, our biographies
might not be so very different.

After so many years together,
I know that I understand you well
enough that any secret would be
simply another chapter of your story,
and that I would still be there
when the last page divulges your
final mystery to the world.
I continue to watch that
silhouette of you in the dark
mosaic of the morning, sitting
alone as if distrustful of what
you might reveal to me in the

(Continue stanza)

lure of moonlight. I could not
find words that night that might
break the silence with poetry, so
I let the ocean speak for us both,
knowing its song is eternal as
I already wished that our journey
together would be.

First Kill

You said because I never judged your past
that you fell for me like a moth drunk just
enough to let both of its wings flicker into
the dancing temptation of a brilliant flame.
I nodded, never divulging that although
I was lured by the wanton sway of how you
walked in jeans, what really captivated me
was the sadness that softened your laughter,
and the loneliness that reached out through
your gaze like a hand opened in pleading.
I guess, I actually loved how you needed me.

I learned how to ask attentive questions
when you talked about your day at work,
and how to rest my head upon you gently,
my weight pressed into my elbows, after
love-making, my ear riding upon your breast,
listening to the one note song of your heart.

But, you never learned how to separate me
from the shadow of the father who abandoned you.
And, when I demurred to quietness when you
would demean me, hoping my silence would
quell your anger, a muscle, small as a child's fist,
began growing like a cancer inside me.

So many nights I would lie in bed, your back
to me, still as a wall, listening again to your
admonishments echoing throughout the room in
repeating volleys like a night filled with gunfire
surrounding a teenage soldier curled up tightly
upon the dank floor of a jungle, unable to move.
In darkness, my grief was hardening into rage.

Then, one day after making you breakfast
which you violently slung into the sink,
sneering it wasn't fit for a homeless dog,
my hand stiffened and drove into your face
like a bat cracking solidly against a ball.

Suddenly, I knew how the soldier feels after his
first kill, when he realizes, in harrowing, silent clarity,
that his shot claimed two victims. He can feel the death

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of his innocence from his own hand, as he becomes solemnly aware that the person now holding his gun is a man rotted perfectly by another's pain.

Becoming Winged

I mold jewelry with my eyes closed, my hands finding
the design within the darkness through which I meander like
smoke trying to discover a passage to the farthest star.
It becomes as luminescent as a crowning diamond.
Before I hide it, I decide it must have a name
for we are taught that everything worth keeping must be labeled,
so a name lifts from my lips which I have never before heard.
I listen to its echo gallop, then I repeat it, and turn away.

I do not know how to discern truth but I know of
love and how pain cripples from inside the heart.
I once turned back after reaching a mountain summit
and gazing eastward at a row of silver crested peaks while
listening to the air sing in lyrics from the first language.
The sun was staring at me intently as a stern parent,
as if to say that the path to wisdom is not traveled by feet,
so while the wind spoke in poems, I continued my journey
by sitting and boring deeper into the cavern of my soul.

What I found can only be described like a young child
painting a portrait of his mother—he will do so poorly,
but with more love than any other artist can depict.
I can share it with you, but only after we take
each other's hands and find a desert through which
to walk until one of us grows faint, and the stronger
must then carry the weight of the other's body
all the way to an oasis and give the other's mouth the first
taste of the water, which will taste as sweet as honey.
Then, after both of us has bathed and rinsed our hair,
we will find that each of us has become winged.