

three poems

by

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The Giant Fish

The giant fish hangs over the lip of the deck
Caked in gray slime and red blood specks.
Stretched over a wood pole and hung by a thick rope,
As if it had come back from the dead,

It swooshes its tail toward the sky's gray bed.
The mouth has a hollow fullness that is singular
Yet the lips appear burned away.

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Water sloshes over the deck and wets the body
As the scales scrape against each other.
Someone running past may have also seen that fish
Hanging in the pier and wondered at the pair

Of long whiskers pointing downward, or heard
The gasping throat that had not forgotten air.
“I am almost torn in half,” a child says to me

As I once stood on the deck's edge and let my toes
Wrap over it, though I may have mistaken words
I could not understand. In dark eyes the sea
Revolves in hurls, singed in a downward spiral.

I guess I had always imagined it would be different—
A boy climbing out of the fish's mouth and drying
His hands on his shorts, after finding what he lost.

But the sunlight sets over the fish's body with a shadow
Extending all the way to the boy who never was.

Great Blue Whale

I imagine you as one imagines a god
who has lifted the weary from under their weariness,
who has sheltered them in your oyster-like gills, fanned out like a rug,
who has hovered over villages broken beyond repair, mines inside of mines,
who has spoken of the pieces of those broken dreams,
who has sunk down into the muddy depths of the worn-out seas, waves upon waves,
who has shattered absence with presence, thrown light, made spirit out of flesh,
who has turned a cave into a mountain, a bough into a crest, mothered a language,
who has made real the wish inside every touch, each cracked hand,
who has not forgotten the grief-songs in pulses, in pauses, in the histories of trauma,
who has dragged a moment out into the momentary,
who has taken the hole in the heart and turned it inside out,
who has drowned with the drowning ages and died with the dying,
who has knelt into the chasm of barbed wire to turn flesh into spirit.

Over villages of wild sea urchins—red-blue, blue-green, yellow-yellow—
lifting the nooks of your great flesh mouth wide as a cavern, a governing
abyss open to those who cannot wait any longer: I imagine you covered
in fibrous earth strands, in the flesh of hard ages, in the soot of a species;
dark grey-blue finite ocean, twitching pulse, cavernous open, ancient death.

I am left to imagine.

Questions from a Child

Where is the worm's spine? How can that bridge
made of stone not fall down? Why does sunshine
quiver like a lamb? Can the wind console hills?
Listen, is mud the closest thing to eternity?
If not eternity, then what is that sense of salvation?
When two people meet, do they each carry a flute
that trails behind like wind? Is sun a giant dew drop?
Can a strand of hair fill the air with sound? Can
sound fall headfirst into a watering hole, then float
between light and dew? Can a ladder made of grass
go up to the sky? Have you seen that I am old as sand?
Why do ants walk on water? If I learn all your words,
can I know all your secrets? What is wild intention?
Why does pain make you patient? Are questions the closest
thing we have to facts? If I see you in a dream,
will I remember and know your face when I wake up?
Are rustic waves hammered into history like shale?
At the turn of sea shells, can we change our souls?