

Held by Water

(Cataluña, España)

i.

In deep green, blue-green evenings of water
cormorants fish. Their warm *negrilla patina* bodies
glide — form in the fabric of sea flexible mollusk nests
flecked by healing turquoise.

i watch the black *S* curve of each neck
the slipper of each head cast

silhouettes of
ink-drenched brush tips
dipping
and lifting —
in
aquarelles.

Waves of æolian half-moons float
by the thousands; a spangled migration of magnesium
blue to the pencil line of horizon.

The boy, Juan, and his father swim
easily near an island rock—

my cousin,
Sylvanna, treads water

above
a creviced
and observant
pulpo.

ii.

A goggled swimmer slips
into nearby boulder shadows, lowers her gaze

to a shoal of striped green minnow
on a current mission
or school of bream, translucence of lemon pulp
nibbling two-fathoms-down
algae.

Schools of cerulean-striped wrasses —
the size of my ring finger — soar

in lattice formation — don't flee —
don't seem to mind —
a pale flipper-swimmer cooling off
among them.

iii.

For three weeks air is hot as a mammal's
internal organs. Cobalt salt water offers infusions of
elemental forces
as light gives sea late-in-the-day iridescence.

Gorgonia sway below, tiny trees of thalo green and gold
each side-branch, the diminutive thumb of
an ancient child's hand signaling ,
perception.

On the surface of a submerged stone — a single starfish splays.
It is red — redder even than Mars
passing close
to home — and one tentacle is gently bent.

i have come to these cliffs, though not exactly this
water for twenty-two summers.
i am home

among the families

though each home
differs as sea turns mercurial
in cohort weather and motion effects the passage of time.

i notice Juan is calmer and more present this year.

iv.

Into tranquil surf, cormorants plunge
pelagic punctuation

\. \. \.

brief rain makes *fleurs-de-lys* in
the sea surface — underwater, jet-black

castañuelas with split
fins turn in mobiles of
suspended Miro configurations —
multi-directional — w/ loose group cohesion

& silvery *serviolas* rise, fan
a glimmer
procession
in the mother liquid.

v.

A quartet of cormorants push-glide — noble heads lift —
their bill-batons air-
tap orchestration beyond ordinary hearing.
Black and white plumage, electron sheen
flashes as one rises up the base of a cliff.

On a solitary shelf, the cormorant spreads
its wings like a person opening
their beach towel to sun — “wing drying behavior”
it’s called — and we can’t help leaping up
to spread — in mimicry — our own crooked arms.

Our shared *signal receiver* is love and the sky.

vi.

i cherish an earth exuberant with life, surrounded
by stars and planets, their energies
buffeting existence —

and i am aware my geocentric focus may be viewed
as nostalgia.

vii.

When a grey flurry torpedoed
into an underwater
swimmer's view — the shock of its *half-leap-up / curled-plunge-down* is an
up-
close
mix

of onyx — *brush* of titanium — one painting
streaking alchemy into
another — the trajectory of a large bird on the hunt
submerged at a downward

40°
angle .

It's like a wingless person flying
or a baby rabbit emerging from an egg —

an eruption from a sleeping creature's dream into the down-
filled pillow of another's.

viii.

the transition from one
dimension to another is ambiguous — mythic — *a disarrangement*
of formal elements such as color, depth, & scale —
reaching for an infinite

ix.

Fish scatter. . . .

A startled swimmer retracts, climbs jangled and dripping from the water.

Juanito is better this year, his mother says.

x.

The gaze of nature pulls us into
an awareness of alliances the influx of external energy
and internal matter communicating
the sensation of waves.

Even as those i love —
animal, mineral fall ill or die or disappear
interactions occur
we are struck by sudden breakages — and
following fish becomes a meditation.
we will die — the earth someday as well.

xi.

As strings hum into place

among divergent forms

a feathered creature behaves like a fish
and a boy's relationship
to the world is improved.

The blaze of nature pulls us in-
to *silver water starry earth*

as polar ice melts
no chemical is entirely isolated ;
though people are divided and neighbors
hang opposing flags
among divergent forms
from plaza windows

interactions occur —

Children rise
and cormorants begin to reappear
as eco-forces enter coastal laws
(nature pulls us into
silver water starry earth).

i experience loss
yet this day i am grateful feel joy
held among fish among odd birds
within family
within

xii.

On the ruced ruins of a harbor
made beautiful by human failure
wind erection and aggressive swell of first-quarter-of-the-century winters
a family of still-young uncles
and middle-aged mothers and cousins form

a supple geometry of umbers

in verticals & diagonals of pine and sienna
slipping into
and out of
evening
water.