

The first time I swam in the ocean at night
It was a thrill
Florida, on a beach with questionable access.
With my sister, in a rental car.
Of course it was my idea.
“Come on, let’s go.”
“It’s so much warmer than you would think!”
I didn’t pause at my ankles, or my knees.
I surrendered my thighs and my breasts.
Would we be eaten, or stung?
I can’t see shark fins in the dark.
Would we dissolve into the dark waves, never to be seen again?
We were breaking more rules than we were following.
I liked that.
My heart beat faster.
The smell of salt and seaweed.
My eyes scanned for the telltale glint of jellyfish in the surf
I was more alive in that moment than I had been all day, or maybe in my whole life.

And now, I am standing
Decades later
At the edge of a roiling mass of elemental aggression
Naked, at night.
I don’t need the thrill of swimming tonight.
The breeze has all but retired for the evening, relieved that the heat of the day has expired.
I gaze up at Orion’s belt, wondering when he, too, will take off his clothes.
But he’s stuck in the eternal story of The Giant Hunter, son of Poseidon.
He’s stuck hunting
And she’s stuck in her role, pitching this constant fit, throwing herself against the rocks, fighting
with herself, picking up the sand and throwing it back down again, moments later.

The first wave sends a nibble of water, barely reaching my feet with her caress. I didn’t think she
was even capable of that kind of tenderness.
So gentle, a trickster lover licking my toes.
The second wave swirls around my ankles, like her warm piss.
And then, without warning, she’s grabbing my thighs, pushing, forcing me to take a step back.
“You are never safe from my wrath.”
Yes. I know. You and your wrath. It’s a thing.

I step backwards, away from her, and lean against a smooth warm boulder, typically dotted with
candles at this time of night. And in front of me, she’s a beast without a cage. Her thrashing
exhausts me. Such force - seems like so much work.

This corner of the beach has been my home for 16 days.

Even when I wake up at 2 am, she is not quiet. She's not like a city that gets quieter at night.

There is no downtime for her chaos.

Hide tide.

Low tide.

She takes bodies and spins them, spits them.

Bashes heads into rocks and snaps spinal columns.

Once a month or so she produces an unidentified lifeless body, on the sand or caught in the rocks.

It's not personal, nor is it difficult. It just is.

I am not thrilled or impressed by her awesome antics.

My bare ass and the palms of my hands against this smooth, warm boulder. We listen and stare each other down. I'm tolerating her matter of fact tantrum. She's there and I'm here.

Her waves could reach me, but she won't bother.

It has been decades since I first swam in the ocean at night.

And now it's a different flutter.

It's the gentle thrill of looking up towards our house and seeing this silver haired god, packing his suitcase on the last night of our honeymoon.

The flutter in my pussy when he grabs my hand in the moonlight, in the taxi, at the restaurant, on the bus, walking down the beach.

The sizzle of feeling chosen.

I feel the warmth of the rock at my back and the spray from her spittle, only a few paces away, her dark void.

I don't know what love feels like when it's easy and simple.

A love so solid it doesn't need future plans.

Then my bare feet are treading in the warm sand of my heart, soft, yielding, one step at a time, across the beach. My eyes take in the stairs, the porch, the walls of the house, but they're really wanting to meet his gaze.

Unprotected from heartbreak

Even from the house, I can hear her noise, penetrating our love bubble.

Fear, thrill, danger

She tumbles over herself all day and night.

Endless crests, explosions, crashes.

Dear Watery One, I'm so sorry you never get to be calm.

I don't need danger to feel alive.

Or do I?

I don't need to thrash in order to make my presence known.

This love is quiet.

We choose each other in the breezy darkness - while she rages.