



REBECCA LINDENBERG

ON THE SEA.

Best of all things is water.
—Pindar

Hold a lamp low over the edge of the pier, and the rays
will come. Through a halo of green luminescence, velvety
sea moths glide.

I have liked to lay in a room with open doors, to smell the
tang of ocean, to feel the salt air dry my tongue.

My father's line went taut and the pole bowed deep. The
boat lurched and the line shimmered with water droplets
slipping down like a strand of pearls. We watched a bright
green backfin displace a wake of water behind us, and
disappear again. My father cranked the reel, each click a
measure of determination until the dolphin-fish was buck-
ing on the floor of the boat. When he speared its throat,
the fish went limp and began to fade from angry yellow-
green back to the blue it knew itself to be. We put it in the
cooler, and my mother watched the mood-ring fish until it
was once again the color of the sea in the place, and she
cried for it.

The fishwife's hands, old as roots, unwind the skeins of
woolen yarn. She pulls her sweater-weave taut as a net.
Later, they will know this fisherman by her patterns—the
lobster, the rope stitch—and not by his angel-blue body,
picked open by crabs.

Weave, weaver of the winds.

Somewhere in the fog, we might hear a whale's stony back
break the surface, might hear it groan, like the creak of
bolts in an old ship's hull.



The sea is always there. I never thought to write about it,
though, until I wasn't anymore.

My sister and I slip across sea-lettuce, fingers stained
blood-purple with the ink of a chiton who refused to be
dislodged from its home among the tide pools.

A photograph: Craig and I on a bench in the foreground.
Behind us, a harbor tessellated by hundreds of triangular
white sails.

All the rivers run to the sea, and yet the sea is not full.