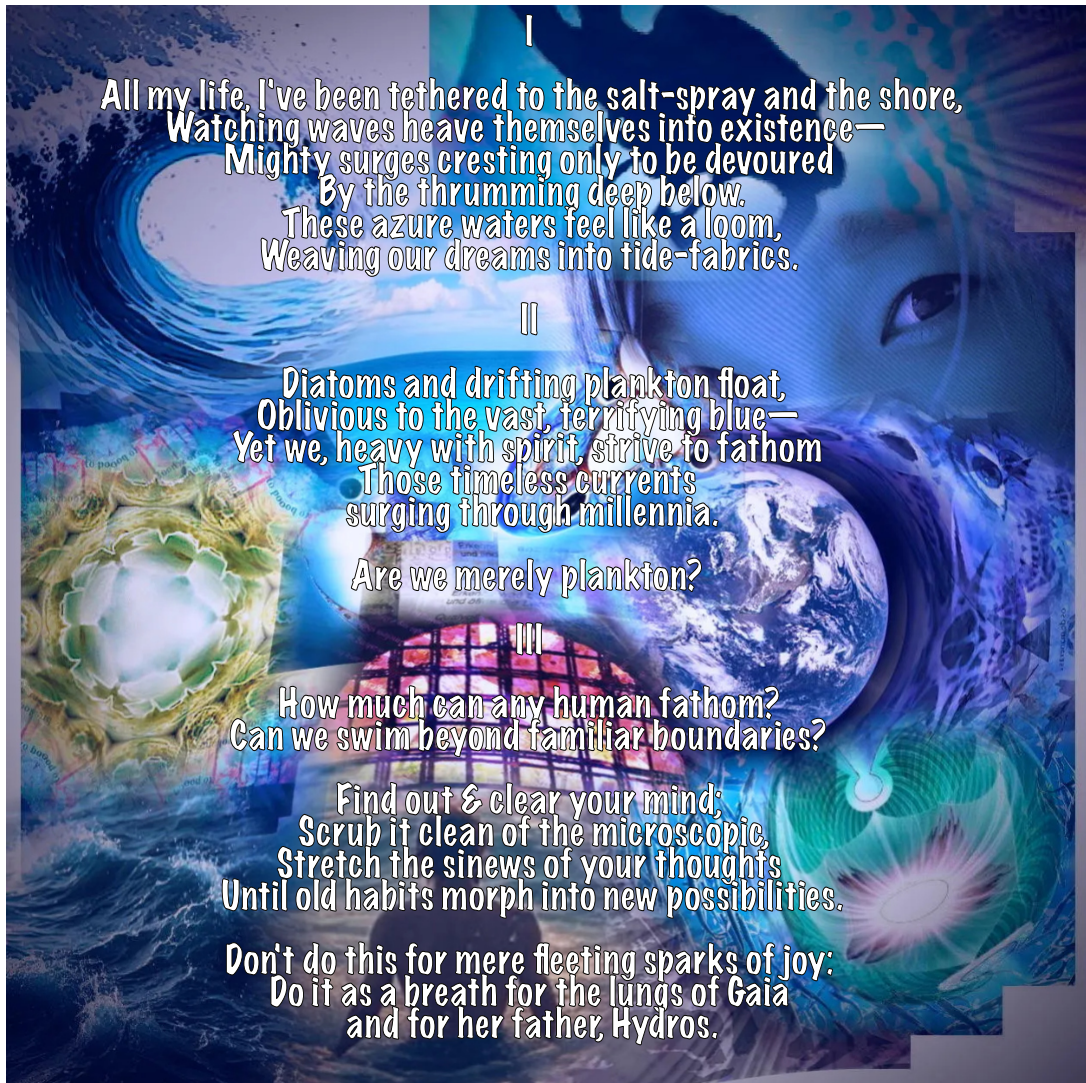


BY THE SEA: Three Tidal Pulses



I
All my life, I've been tethered to the salt-spray and the shore,
Watching waves heave themselves into existence—
Mighty surges cresting only to be devoured
By the thrumming deep below.
These azure waters feel like a loom,
Weaving our dreams into tide-fabrics.

II
Diatoms and drifting plankton float,
Oblivious to the vast, terrifying blue—
Yet we, heavy with spirit, strive to fathom
Those timeless currents
surging through millennia.
Are we merely plankton?

III
How much can any human fathom?
Can we swim beyond familiar boundaries?
Find out & clear your mind;
Scrub it clean of the microscopic,
Stretch the sinews of your thoughts
Until old habits morph into new possibilities.
Don't do this for mere fleeting sparks of joy:
Do it as a breath for the lungs of Gaia
and for her father, Hydros.

Jules stared at this poem, a deep crease etching his brow, tapping the image with a restless finger. His voice thick with dry, weary skepticism. "What hackneyed trite!" he grumbled. "This poem should dissolve into the sea."

Elijah didn't look up. He merely stared through the window at the horizon where a gray sky met some dark water. "In time," he murmured, his voice thin, seeming to drift away like a whisper on the wind, "Everything returns to the sea. It might take aeons, but eventually everything returns to the marine deep."

Ellesha straightened slightly, crossing her legs and resting her hands on her knees with a theatrical flair. Then she closed her eyes and pitched her voice into a resonant, mock-solemn drone. "The only thing that needs to disappear is our flimsy egos," she intoned playfully. "The brittle shells of our selves stand between us and Divine."

Jules released a short, skeptical guttural gerp, rolling his eyes to the ceiling, while Andrei leaned in, his shadow stretching, piercing eyes surveying the circle. "Why are we having idiotic conversations like this?" He challenged.

Ellesha dropped her facade, eyes snapping open, meeting Philyra's gaze with a sharp smile. "Are we?" she asked, irony dripping from her tone, "Unless we have a stomach for incongruity, how can we digest wisdom?"

- T Newfields

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