

Evensong

by A. Pseudonym

Evensong

Before nightfall on the water I sit on the sand as it grows colder. I like to feel the air change with the light. The way the ocean gathers presence as the people leave. The way the moon gathers in the blood of the sun. The way horizons disappear in the dark.

Bathers' chatter quiets. I see them in their cars with the good tired feeling. What remains on their skin of the beach spills as it dries into cracks between seats and will stay there forever, maybe. Eternities transferred. Misplaced. Sometimes remembered. But lost now in some moment's profusion.

The tide and the stars now appearing are so different from that.

While my shadow grows long and then sinks, music rises on the low ridge of an inlet down the way. The singers in procession from its end to its mouth make their way to the waves. They are naked and pale like old snow on a bright night. In front an old woman's ankles brace in the shallows. Her voice shakes. She moves forward through the lunging water and does not fall. Her fellows follow and the song grows louder, until it grows softer.

Every night some come. I know this because I am here too, every night. First I thought they were beautiful. Beautiful like the other things here, after dark. Ended day, ancient lights, thieving moon. The wind twice invisible.

But now I believe they are sad. Not sad like a violin; sad like something forgotten. I see a choir of worshipers, who could be lovers.

In the morning they float limp and slick in the tide and are left by the ocean in grey heaps on the beach. Men come early for their bodies.

