

The Starfish and The Pin Joint

by Agnes Ezra Arabella

The two boys walked the long dock to the edge of bay,
like scrappy lobsters pointing toward the waves,
"The cockroaches of the sea,"
his father said,
It was the old country
"Only prisoners were fed lobster.
They stayed in the damp
holes."
He thought the sea ebbed and flowed like a tarantula
on a linoleum floor
impregnated with a venom
that spilled over the sand,
rotten cider
distilled by the stove
He hated his father,
but over breakfast,
he remained quite.
He did not say a word
but almost choked on his cereal.
A lush patch of seaweed floated
toward the jetty
They were planning to swim to the motor boat
moored out toward the horizon.

He had a song in his head
that floated out into the sky
over the clouds
he heard it in the image of a pistol
with large trigger,

from in his father's
gun cabinet
Then a peacock
with golden eyes
and the soul of a seagull
burning away on a comet
The burning hot Summer,
he said to his friend, as they sat on the dock, smoking a pin joint,
"My father said, I don't have the trappings of a successful life...
No girlfriend, no grades... No motivation to be somebody'
like a waste of space'".
A large seagull came to rest on the wood
of the jetty, while another was picking at the left over flesh
in the trash can
and the smallest sea gull
nibbling stray meat in a razor clam
"I wanted to hit him after that..."
The waves lapped at his toes as he flicked the water off his foot,
"I did... I wanted to pick up the stool and beat him with it."
The sun moved behind a patch of clouds...
that looked like cotton candy set on fire.
"Don't listen to him..."
His friend said and threw a handful of rocks,
he had collected earlier that day,
into the water,
"Your dad is an asshole.
He is a rotten ass,
He makes all ass holes, look ass less.
That is how much of an asshole he is".
His friend watched a sailboat change course in the wind
And head away from the bay.
"Let's swim out as far as we can...
Let's swim out until our whole bodies hurt."

He never saw a starfish on the beach

When he ran the coastline
as a child,
In Nantucket he found a sand dollar once,
he remembered how fragile it looked on the sand
and when he held it,
It seemed weightless,
He read once
In National Geographic:
"Starfish with their remarkably famous shapes
and bloodless bodies."
His father had a collection,
His father's father had left him.

They jumped off the dock,
enveloped by the deep deep cold
and felt the cool pressure of the water pressing on their joints
like location, on a map
telling them like tentacles gracing for buoyancy
among glass-like tides
to swim to the
motor boat
He reached the boat and
pulled himself up
like a crawling snail
Slowly one leg and then the other
over the side of the boat
His friend
"I am so light headed,
from all those drags... the smoke"
He pulled his friend down
to lay out on the bottom of the boat
The waves rocked them softly
He reached out and touched his friend's lips
with his pointer finger,
"I love you."

Then drew his finger down his friend's
spine.

A spider finger
Venom too intense,
"I love you,
beautiful..."

The sun was warm
and he watched the clouds
float like an abstract video game,
Undirected, with aimless flotations,
hovering momentarily,
like Mortal Kombat,
too violent
Then disappearing,
"That weed was good,"
One said to the other.

The other boats loomed
Like a history lesson
The founding Father's
sailed
through the shallow and rough waters
he imagined coming over the horizon
The Nina, The Pinata,
The Santa Maria
with large exaggerated sails.
The horror where this place stretches out its legs
like lobster feces.

