

# 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,  
hoovering 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.

