

# The Young Woman Swimming

*by* Agnes Ezra Arabella

She stepped in  
like ice alone  
could save her  
she dived,  
slicing the wave  
with her body  
her fresh pony tail  
submerged  
like a silk scarf  
then swam moving the  
water away  
like whirlpools  
could hold her buoyantly  
save her from the headache  
whispering words  
They had been there all night  
like a rocking chair  
the crisp Atlantic  
close to Cape Cod  
air.  
The pull of the waves  
and the tide was  
an amethyst  
for a moment  
purple and pale blue.  
A fire  
Too lovely for  
a drowning.  
A drowning

that first starts by  
being swallowed by  
a wave.  
the kind that goes up  
the nose  
and feels like the whole  
head is being  
submerged in water.  
The kind that stings  
the back of the nostril  
and feels like your  
mother has washed  
your mouth out  
with soap  
to float  
Solo  
Dead man  
toes pointing to the sky  
She thought of  
Anne Boleyn at the guillotine.  
"Annabel"  
The name floated in her head  
the name  
"Annabel"  
The one eyed cat her  
neighbor had found  
under the enclosed porch  
The cat was left  
during the Pandemic  
could not be afforded anymore  
Poor destitute fool  
charmed her way in  
through the basement window  
And shrieking bloody murder at 5 am  
Sometimes Annabel would sleep

and use her head as a pillow  
She remembered,  
He said,  
"No I have to go."  
He wanted to find the comet  
at 3 in the morning.  
She told him to take a picture for her  
The elements electric  
Telephone wire fossils  
run the sky.  
But, remember you  
cannot capture the tail  
of a comet on a cellphone.  
You need a slower exposure.  
You need a Tripod to put the  
camera on.  
She floated the dead man's float,  
Getting the water  
in her nose and mouth,  
When the waves came in from the faster  
moving motor boat  
went over the waves  
leaving a wave of surf  
to flip over her  
buoy head as she looked into  
a very blue sky  
Clouds that looked like  
pulled cotton balls on  
her dresser  
She wanted to,  
"Flee on her donkey,  
from the madhouse  
before it was too late,"  
She wanted him to touch her  
on the couch

as they lay watching television.  
She wanted him to look into  
her eyes  
and see her  
She wanted him to lick her ear  
Like a lollipop  
The unsettled girl with her voices and the  
lovely girl with her graces  
Her ability to turn the world at every angle  
Prism like  
Optical illusion after optical illusion  
warped but crystal like  
in beaming reflection when the  
sun hit  
just right  
More holy than an evil eye  
The crystal prism produced  
light  
as sharp as a razor blade  
She wanted him to love this  
The prism  
but he never knew how she was  
The voices beating through the night  
So secret  
Safety  
Safety  
was a rock  
she wanted to swim to  
She wanted to believe  
she could be more lucid.  
He gave her a red miniature rose  
from his garden  
he grew it  
on the front yard patio  
She put it behind her ear

and drove  
with it  
all the way home.  
Home-she would return to herself  
Like her dead man's float  
She lifted herself out of the water,  
Licking off the salt  
on her lips,  
staring into a well  
of dug out sculpted sand.

