

My House In The Middle Of The Ocean

by John Olson

I built a house in the middle of the ocean. I used sunlight for nails.
Wind for wood. Stars for chandeliers. The moon for a doorknob.

Night and day my house on the ocean rocked. The chandeliers
swayed, the floorboards creaked with the movements of the sea, and
the living room glittered with the milk of infinity.

My furniture was made of coral and surf. I had a surf sofa, a surf
dinette set, a surf loveseat, a surf console, a surf espresso desk, a
coffee table of Indonesian coral, a Bay of Bengal bed, and faucets of
gorgeous fjord and Bermuda gold.

Sirens for lightbulbs.

Jellyfish lamps. Octopus cushions. Salmon windows. Pompano
curtains.

On Wednesdays I played the clarinet. When I felt avid with night I
played Bach. When I was filled with the emulsions of daylight and
reverie I played Brahms.

My life was a life of water.

Water and salt. Variables and rags.

I was followed everywhere by the molecules of a ghostly dog.
Though it might have been a parrot, or the honey of time scratching
itself with clouds.

It might also have been a naked objective. Or a syndication of gut
awhirl in a shell of mother-of-pearl.

The walls were a millennium of current and eyeballs cohering in
bone.

The sea engenders the pulse of momentum. One is surrounded on
all sides by living things. It is not like the desert. It is like the desert
and not like the desert. The ocean is a desert of vast open space, but
the vastness of the ocean is a continuous reverie. The scintillation of
waves. A dream of nerves and beauty in which the bitter fist of

existence blossoms into a garden of gills and tongues. Fish eats fish and the cycle of life and death is a perpetual glistening of indecipherable silk. The tender blue of intestines. Vexation awakening a pearl in the flesh of an oyster.

The desert is silent, but the ocean is full of sound. Its very transparency is a transparency of sound. The sound of opals. The sound of undulation dappled with the scriptures of the sun.

My basement was a mile deep.

My sink was a melody of scars.

This was my house on the ocean. The house I built with understanding and dreams and the fat awkward tools of language.

A house held together by jelly. Bamboo and gauze and the timber of intuition.

