

A sea that is not a sea

Emily Winters

Dare I tie my boat to Yours?
Tethered,
We could weather the typhoon,
Grin and bear the weight of a
Sea that is not a sea.

But the part of my brain
That's always on the
Edge of her seat –
Precise, the precipice of an
Artlessly honed blade –
Wonders whether you're good for me:
Whether your kind of madness
Won't wear the rope thin.
Whether by setting me alight I'd
Suffocate with my head in your sweater,
Burn burn to death a carelessly
Careful hand on the
Back of my neck.
Whether by killing me you
Set me free.

Death can be an art, like theft.
A steady leaking through a window left
Open to the night – faucet drip,
Slow melt of an invisible tangible thing, alive but
Too dead to remember the feeling of a
Patch of skin, exposed between jean and
Jacket, your hand a lily pad on
My pond, a
Stray thought pristine penny
Deposited into my ocean,

Plopped cross-legged on my
Bedroom floor like
Tell me a story.
Tell me the story of the time
You were stolen away at
Virgin dawn, a hairsbreadth away from
First light.
Tell me again how it felt so
Cold when It
Leeched in through the sweetly ignorant, barely-open
Window and held your hand and held
Your pulse in Its fist.

Remember when you held my
Breath in your mouth until lungs
Burned, until you could taste the
Things I feared saying aloud on your
Tongue, your parched mind and
I fed you with my silence and you
Stripped me bare, knowing now what I
Never dared to glance in the
Mirror, your face reflected back and even the
Sky was an open-armed basin then, a
Reflection that broke apart
Easily, flower petals or
Ashes to ashes snagged on a
Rotor, just another loose end
Tied up neatly and jettisoned behind us as
We ride waves, and hope to
Meet a storm to test our
Mettle. As
We ride waves, and we
Burn
Burn
Burn.