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## Larkspur Ferry

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# Larkspur Ferry

Dave Seter

What makes me so content  
skidding along the sea,  
the ferry at full speed,

the water's surface crinkled  
but not fully torn,  
like words revised, not discarded?

For thirty minutes, motion  
takes me away from obligations—  
captive but free—a dichotomy.

There's peace in this knowledge  
these waters won't be broken  
by sea monsters surfacing,

only a loon that dives  
to avoid capture by the wake,  
or an occasional curious seal.

Curious how we yearn for  
the unusual, the spontaneous,  
but savor the predictable:

clean air; clean water;  
a little dirtier since Eden, yes,  
but it supports us just fine.

In this peaceable frame of mind  
I can dream of sea monsters  
rising dripping kelp,

scaly like life, but in my heart  
I can lie to myself, jaws ajar,  
that steel trap will never quite trip

# Courtship at Bay

In a dance  
older than waltz or quadrille,  
they choose the same seats

three nights in a row,  
an empty one in between

as if the liquid world  
makes what happens  
on this boat tilt  
toward decorum.

To find the promiscuous  
you would need to look at  
the halo of gulls  
noisy with want  
that trails this ferry boat.

But none of these  
distances are coincidental,  
whether to shore, or each other.  
Her nod turns to  
his hello turns to  
say did you notice?

She shifts almost  
perceptibly on the surface  
of the sea and her head  
inclines as if by gravity.

The catamaran slows into port,  
deepening its draw  
as if a sudden thirst  
has come upon us all.

## **Meditation Above Rodeo Lagoon**

Because I notice salt crystals  
that form on the fine hair of her forearm  
after the long pull uphill on bicycles—

or maybe because I daydream  
too much, never remembering  
my overnight dreams—

I tell her a pelican's bill and pouch  
shaped this lagoon, shovelful by shovelful.  
This is the place where I first saw them plunge

for the salt knowledge of their ancestors.  
She frowns as if impossible things  
should all be called lies.

I kick at rock the color of ripe persimmon  
that forms this hillside where we rest—  
rock catalogued by geologists—

the iron measured gram by gram.  
I want to ask about our relationship  
with the earth, whether it carries any weight

or is that the cave of want I inhabit  
with a thirst for salt and a hunger for muscle  
along the curvature of time?