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Michelle Leber

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Tales Four Metres Deep *by Michelle Leber*

Underwater days painted blue.
You would dive off the point, swim
the reef to Melissa's Ledge.
The snakelock anemones
were greener than sea-velvet,
slippery as glass. Sometimes

inside the eel-meadow, long reeds
would catch thundering flippers,
slow us down. That eleven-armed sea-star
clamped tight onto a mussel;
even though you saw the final tug—
its somersaulting heart like your own

misadventure, you swum on.
And when summer ended
you became fearless.
Just like that pod of striped
old wives reclaiming
their pride, wiser to reef drops.

Some years later, I would
swim with you again.
Still that familiar concern for
the lost bathyal fish—
reduced to skeleton. Its formless head
stuck in the same bull-kelp cavern.

Michelle Leber has been a guest at local poetry readings, festivals and community engagements. Her work has appeared in *The Best Australian Poems 2009* (Black Inc), *The Age*, *Meanjin*, *Cordite*, ecology bulletins, high school texts and on trains. She was selected for the LongLines Poetry workshop at Varuna in 2009. Her book *The Weeping Grass* is to be published by the Australian Poetry Centre in 2010.