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## Empty Spaces

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## Pero: Empty Spaces

### EMPTY SPACES

Alice Pero

At the beach all my exclamation points  
turn upside down  
I am caught staring  
at the empty spaces sea pulls out of me  
I fill myself with discoveries:  
a monster mussel, ancient shellfish warrior  
clinging to a huge mass of seaweed,  
wiggling starfish  
and dozens of delicate sand dollars

I am a sea relic addict  
I can't stand the silence inside me  
I scurry for tiny things  
to clutter a mind washed too clean

The bucket fills with oddities:  
a haul of clamshells covered in barnacles,  
the barnacles wearing sea grass like mole hairs  
and broken mussel shells all worn down to nothing,  
blackened outer covering gone,  
leaving pure mother-of-pearl,  
a shining filling me up,  
all those old holes mended