ocean culture



TRAXTHINKOCEAN NOV 2022

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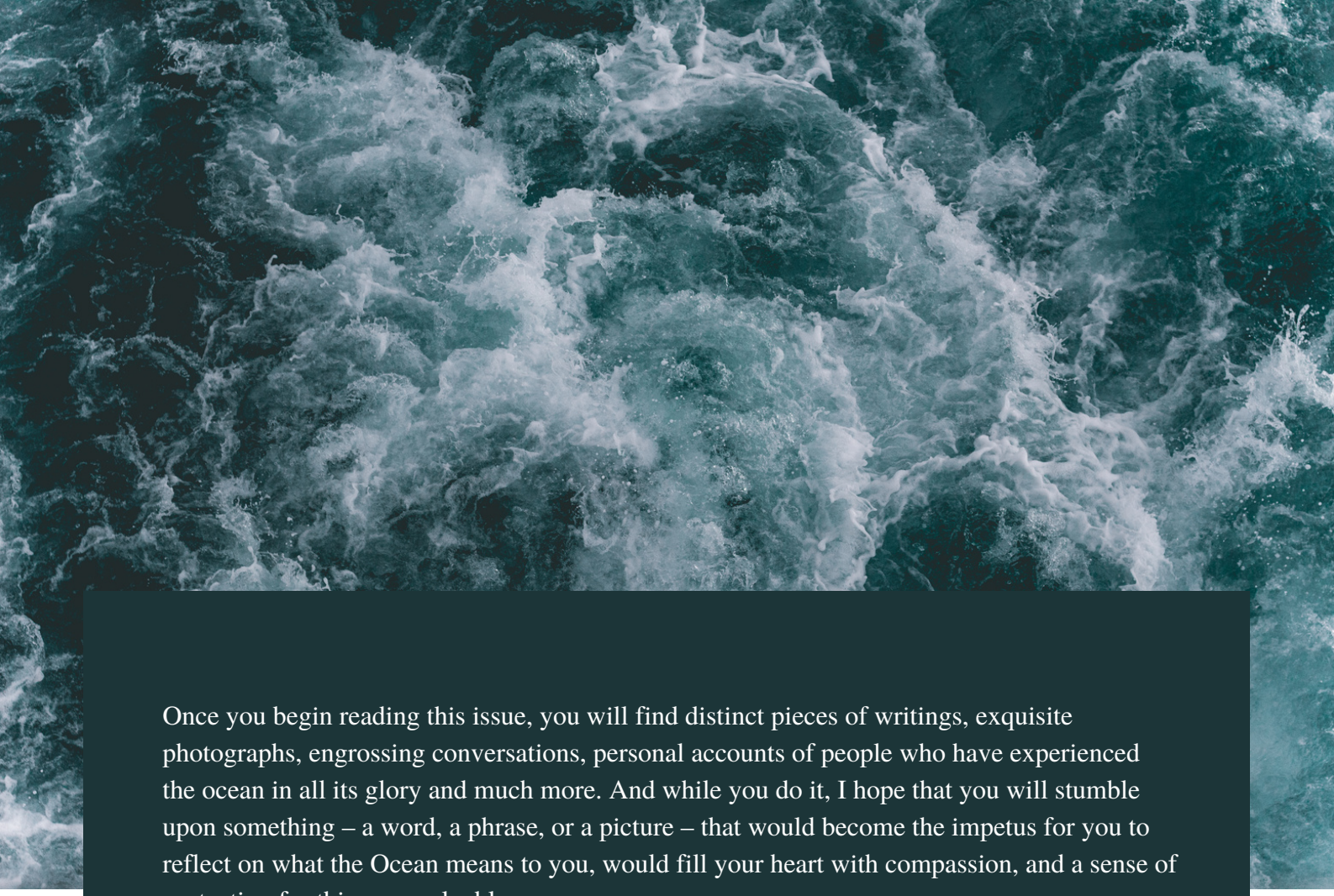


Note from Team TRA

The ocean has been a subject of people's creative creations since time immemorial, and it's easy to understand why. As an element of nature, it is made up of complexities, contradictions, and mystery; it is both calm and wild, beautiful yet occasionally hostile – this juxtaposition of the two extremes intrigues people. The way I see it, the entire humankind shares a peculiar relationship with the Ocean. We rush to the ocean to find solace when things get too hard to bear, to revel in the silence of the shore with the occasional sound of waves crashing on the land's surface, yet the way we relentlessly exploit it has increasingly put the health of this crucial resource in peril. If the Ocean could speak to us, which it often does by the way of its reactions to our inconsiderate actions, it would probably only express its agitation, thus making it all the more important for us to hear what it has to say.That is precisely the reason why this issue exists; we wanted to give the Ocean a voice through words.

Since the inception of The Remnant Archive, one of our major objectives with what we curate has not only been to put forth what our readers would like to read, but also what they should get acquainted with as citizens of the international community. Expression, in any form, is a medium to initiate change, and as a journal comprising features on art and literature, we believe what we bring for our readers should in some way add to their perspectives and provoke constructive thoughts. The idea of this special issue, that has been curated in collaborative partnership with ThinkOcean Society, was conceived collectively by both the organisations with the same aim: to acquaint the readers with Ocean Culture – something that they should know of as members of a society that is currently dealing with a severe impact of climatic change caused by years of neglect.

When we first decided on the theme, we were clear on the fact that we did not just want to disseminate factual information about what Ocean Culture is, nor did we want to educate our readers on conservation and management, rather we wanted to put forward content which would make a person sit and reflect on the humankind's relationship with the ocean – from a personal and societal standpoint, in turn making it a starting point for the enhancement of the much-needed awareness, at individual, community, and global level.



Once you begin reading this issue, you will find distinct pieces of writings, exquisite photographs, engrossing conversations, personal accounts of people who have experienced the ocean in all its glory and much more. And while you do it, I hope that you will stumble upon something – a word, a phrase, or a picture – that would become the impetus for you to reflect on what the Ocean means to you, would fill your heart with compassion, and a sense of protection for this very valuable resource.

As we finally share this meticulously compiled zine with you, I sincerely want to thank the wonderful contributors without whom we wouldn't have been able to actualise what we had once only visualised.
I would also like to extend my gratitude towards ThinkOcean Society for making this collaboration possible. Lastly, a huge thanks to all the members of team TRA for their relentless efforts and support.

To all the readers, I hope you like reading what you have just picked up!
Happy reading!

Nehal Lala
Founding Editor
The Remnant Archive



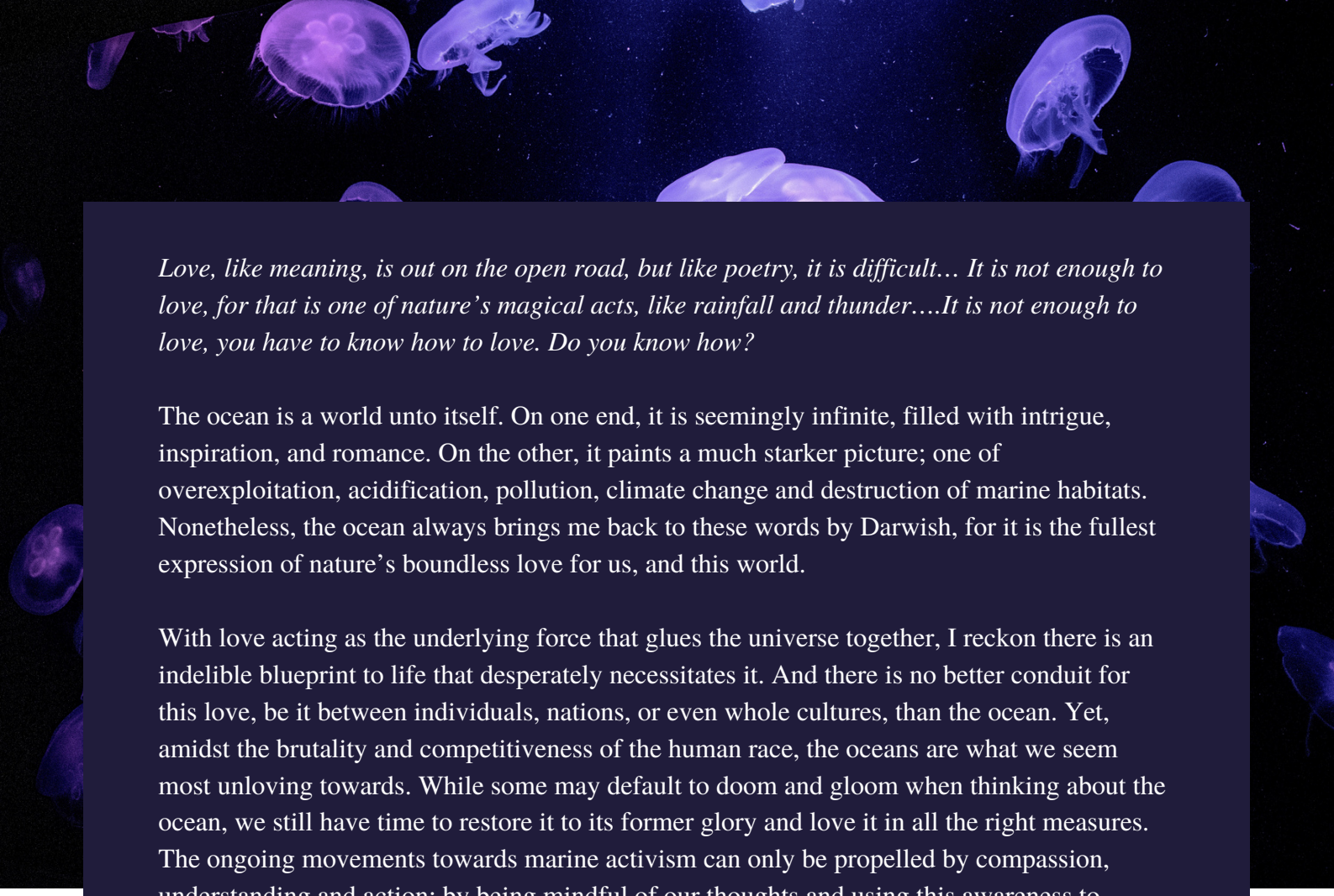
Notes from Team Think Ocean

At the start of this collaboration, I felt a sense of pride that here were two youth-led organizations partnering to achieve something together they could not achieve alone. This issue is the final result of months-long work between our two communities, a process of mutual-empowerment, learning, and creative exploration. And, critically, it was a process that derived meaning from giving a platform to others: those whose works of photography, poetry and writing feature on these pages.

The creation of this issue is also a milestone for ThinkOcean. Since 2017, our work has centered around educating about and advocating for the world's oceans. Our motto has been that everything ties back to the ocean. This gives new meaning to that. We cannot only speak the language of science when we advocate for marine protection, we must also speak the language of art. Everything ties back to the ocean--certainly water and food systems, climate dynamics and weather patterns, but also human history, culture, and imagination. It is our hope that this issue demonstrates that.

Finally, it is my personal hope that this issue inspires readers to think beyond the usual boundaries of their work. Art, at its finest, enables a new mode of thinking. It challenges an existing worldview. As the climate crisis exposes each crack in our failing systems, our worldview needs changing more than ever.

Serag Heiba
Outgoing Executive Director
ThinkOcean



Love, like meaning, is out on the open road, but like poetry, it is difficult… It is not enough to love, for that is one of nature's magical acts, like rainfall and thunder….It is not enough to love, you have to know how to love. Do you know how?

The ocean is a world unto itself. On one end, it is seemingly infinite, filled with intrigue, inspiration, and romance. On the other, it paints a much starker picture; one of overexploitation, acidification, pollution, climate change and destruction of marine habitats. Nonetheless, the ocean always brings me back to these words by Darwish, for it is the fullest expression of nature's boundless love for us, and this world.

With love acting as the underlying force that glues the universe together, I reckon there is an indelible blueprint to life that desperately necessitates it. And there is no better conduit for this love, be it between individuals, nations, or even whole cultures, than the ocean. Yet, amidst the brutality and competitiveness of the human race, the oceans are what we seem most unloving towards. While some may default to doom and gloom when thinking about the ocean, we still have time to restore it to its former glory and love it in all the right measures. The ongoing movements towards marine activism can only be propelled by compassion, understanding and action; by being mindful of our thoughts and using this awareness to cultivate the right practices.

This issue illustrates the depth of our eons-old relationship with the oceans. If you pause and reflect, as we often did when putting it together, you will be reminded of rousing moments from your own life, and reflect on the person they helped shape you into. We came across intersections of fiction, memoir, and non-fiction that exemplify the power and anguish of the oceans as a collaboration between a women-run literary collective and a student-led activist organisation.

If art and literature are the tides rolling in from the infinite ocean of human thoughts, feelings, and being, then this magazine is a collection of the most exquisite sea shells. We sat by the shore and sifted through the hundreds of them that lay on the sand, —the conches, the clams, the commons, and the rares. If you hold them up to your ears and listen carefully, you can still hear the whirling of the vast ocean that brought them into our palms.

We want to thank the wonderful contributors who entrusted us with their work, or as we like to call them, their stories, and also to everyone else who will further choose to encourage, support and be a part of these stories. We hope we're able to open a window in your soul!

Shubhangi Thakur
Executive Director
ThinkOcean

In conversation with
Ksenia Salion



KSENIA SALION

Ksenia is a visual artist living in New York. With her installations and digital collages she is creating a new platform for discussing climate change & sustainability. To create her Eco installations she uses recent internet articles about climate change. She combines collages of the article's headlines, images of flowers, corals & female faces combined with messages. She incorporates projection mapping during her art installations. The message of these installations - We are one with nature! Choose Planet, We are not living on Earth, we are Earth, Manifest Love, It's in my Nature to Love. We have to stop destroying our planet, because when we are destroying the planet we are destroying ourselves. Manifest love for the planet and yourself. In the end, Love is the answer!

Love (heal) your Planet, your body and your soul!
Ksenia's newest art concept is: If corals had eyes they would look very sad. Ksenia experiments with live digital painting on people. She projects images of fluorescent corals, flowers and other videos of nature on model's faces. Digital painting is the most sustainable kind of painting, there is no pigment or canvas being used. Light is being used as a paint medium and the model's face/body is a canvas. She projects Images of corals layered on the human face to create a surreal effect. In a way it looks that corals are part of the model's face, and at the same time the coral looks like it has human eyes, and it looks directly at you, making an eye connection with you. It depends on how you look at it.





Why did you choose art as a medium to express yourself and the urgency that you felt towards raising serious awareness about climate change, rather than other creative and cathartic mediums such as writing or filmmaking?

We live in a time of great change, where we need to rethink our ways of living. By healing the Earth we'll heal ourselves. There is no other way around! We need a strong movement to drive the change and I firmly believe that art as a medium of expression is very powerful. As an artist I want my art to change the world.

My artworks usually revolve around themes like - We are one with nature; Choose Planet; We are not living on Earth, we are Earth; Manifest Love. It is in my nature to express the love that I have for the planet.

We have to stop destroying our planet, because when we are destroying the planet we are destroying ourselves. I urge everyone to manifest love for the planet because in the end, Love truly is the answer!

Love (heal) your Planet, your body and your soul!

The ocean is an elemental, unrelenting force often associated with fear of the unknown. How do you, as an artist, navigate its depths and streamline areas of focus while also making sure your inspiration and work are intriguing and challenging?

I've always been fascinated by the ocean. More than 80% of the ocean has never been explored. I think it particularly attracts me because it's so mysterious. When I was a kid, I was really inspired by Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who is a marine explorer, inventor, conservationist, filmmaker. He was a real hero for me! I grew up watching his movies about the ocean. His work has always inspired me to create my own.

The general conscience today is unaware of the role the ocean has to play in restoring environmental equilibrium. How do you envisage a world replete with growing climate anxiety and a lack of visible action to tackle related problems?

My most recent body of work is motivated by the beauty and functionality of bioluminescent phytoplankton. Ocean and seas produce more oxygen than plants and trees, and the proportions are not even close! Yes, most of the air we breathe comes from the water surrounding our planet! But how? It is produced by marine plants and trillions of tiny one-celled organisms called Phytoplankton, found in both salt and fresh bodies of water. Trees don't produce most of the Earth's oxygen, which makes up 21 percent of the Earth's atmosphere, the ocean does. These plant organisms are too small to be seen with the naked eye, but when billions of them gather together during an algal bloom, they look like green slime (chlorophyll gives them their color).
They may be too tiny to see, but phytoplanktons are one of the most important organisms needed for the ocean and the rest of the planet to survive.

Our readers would love to divulge into your creative process. Have mythical lores and stories related to the ocean inspired your creations? Is there a specific genre of music that helps you embrace your artistry? How much time does it take for you to sustain an idea till its culmination? Is inspiration hard to find? How do you get over creative blocks?



I think at first I was inspired by photos of Bioluminescence at night. I kept wondering what it was, and why it glowed. Then I started reading about it and I learned that it's actually bioluminescent plankton. In addition to producing 50-80% of the planet's oxygen, some plankton can glow in the dark! It looked absolutely stunning & magical! The word for this is “bioluminescence,” which comes from “bio,” meaning life, and “lumin,” meaning light. Most of these plankton glow blue. And it's really fascinating and looks like some kind of light artwork!

>>>> Then I was inspired & moved by the movie "Chasing Coral". It's really tragic that the coral reefs are disappearing, and this was the first documentary that talked about it with such alarm and clarity and everyone started about it afterward. In the movie, they have shown that some corals glow beautiful blue, purple and yellow, right before they die. It's a silent cry for help.

My newest art concept is: "If corals had eyes they would look very sad" has been inspired by that. I have experimented with live digital painting on people. I project images of fluorescent corals, flowers and other videos of nature on model’s faces. Digital painting is the most sustainable kind of painting, there is no pigment or canvas being used. Light is being used as a paint medium and the model's face/body is a canvas. I project images of corals layered on the human face to create a surreal effect. In a way it looks that corals are part of the model's face, and at the same time the coral looks like it has human eyes, and it looks directly at you, making an eye connection with you. It depends on how you perceive and interpret it.

Is it even possible to capture the fragility and spontaneity of nature in an art installation? What was it like to bring an oceanic organism out into the galleries of the world with nothing but white walls? Did you ever feel conflicted that your vision was getting jeopardized at some point?

Yes. Definitely. I could never exhibit my art work with sound because a couple of times I showed there were other shows running simultaneously with mine. But I would love to show my corals artworks and present live projection in a gallery in collaboration with a sound artist.

If you had to give any advice to artists delving into a niche sphere of relating ocean advocacy with the revolutionary implications of art, what would it be?

I guess the advice would be to also take some kind of classes, watch movies or sign up for climate training. I completed my climate training at Climate Reality. It's an organization founded by Al Gore. I think it's very important to know all the facts, have an in-depth understanding of things and acquaint oneself to what is exactly happening with the planet and the ocean. It also helps the artist to be more clear with their message.

love song of salt & water

by Anushka Paresh Nagarmath

sound travels five times faster underwater than in air
& the human ear hasn't evolved enough to hear it,
so we don't call out to each other under the waves
instead, we hold our names beneath our tongues
& taste them in each other's mouths,
dirty & desperate,
like sailors thrown overboard,
& everything is lighter in water,
so even our hearts stay afloat,
or maybe that is just a rule for dead things
& what is *salt*
if not another word for *longing*?
we resurface,
crooked crowns of sandflies
clinging to our forehead
the bleached whale bones of our lungs,
still singing for each other
you say, *god must be really lonely.*
why else would they have made the ocean?
and i think about it for a second and say,
no. maybe they're just in love.



beach crabs burrow but

by Abhiram Kuchibhotla

a cuboid of water exists
in the aquarist's study
his pāśa visible beyond the glass' features
amongst the shimmery goliathal creatures
cosmonautical tattoos living lives
shark-finned whale-like inky hazes
purport and drift, not too far
from four translucent walls

inside this haven
a nonpareil crab
tap-tap
tap-tap-tap-taps
a circle to see amber sand below
the celeste blue of fresh arctic ice
painted into water elsewhere else

look through spindly glinty stalks
its only companion dead scallop striped gold/burgundy
a calcified coracle clashes with vermilion bodice
quite magnificently

feel blue blood flow beneath carapace
perhaps, the same celeste as outer space?
feel left-toothy pincer clamping coral staff
agitating it at the oceanic expanse, an epigraph?
ten legs scuttling on the chipped tip
of one miraculously intact ship

the proud pirate conqueror
of this desert of detritus
in its sight, everything, of this
solitary cancer
do you want what it possesses
this void-like environ of elixir?









The Ocean Speaks

by Constance Edu Baffoe

My siblings were not enough
So, they continued with me
I hosted them with pleasure
I offered a display of my kingdom's beauty
In return, they appalled my image
One litter, I gave a frown
Two litters, a strong wave
I could not dance anymore
My movements were trapped in their filth
That did not deter
Then their sons joined in
They daughters were worse
I wail for my children
I became a dead zone for the marine life
Some died before they were born
I am a reversal of what I take
I make my way back to humans
The cancer may not warn
At least their birth defects should scare
I hear their kings gave a gathering
Some promised bans
Others cleaned my home
Would this ever last?
I am a friend, not an enemy

White-Lip Daughter (Pinctada)

by Annette C. Boehm

[how do i] speak

with a mouth filled with salt-

water [pearl]

[mother, how do i]

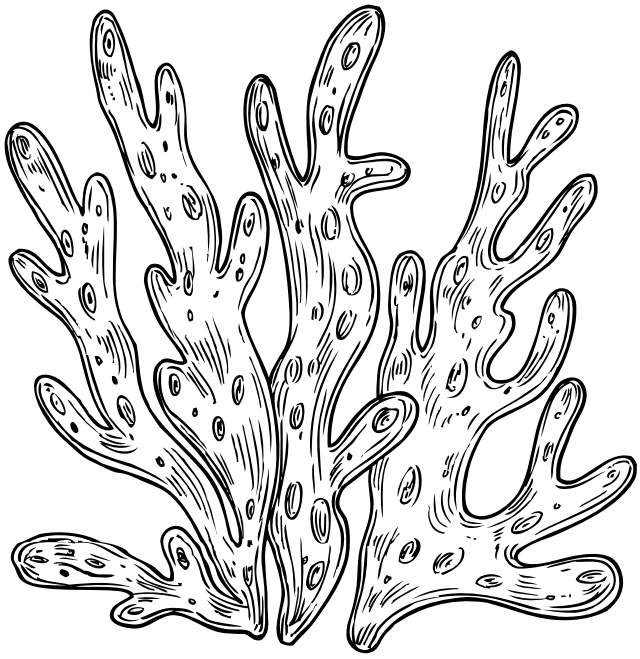
express this sharp-

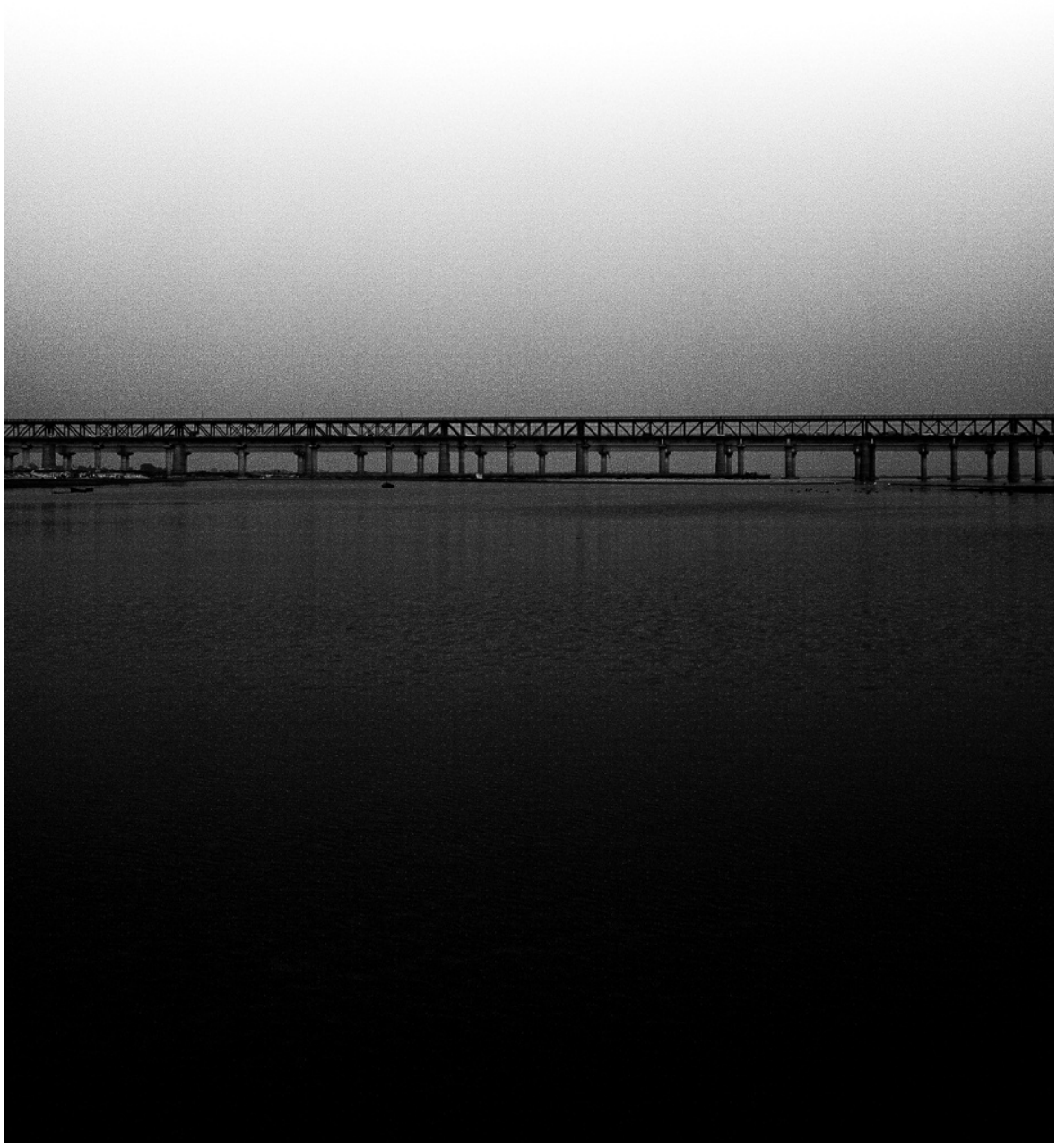
edged sand

[why do i] grow

heavy with salt, with nacre,

brittle with calcium, and hard —







Cairnbulg

by R S Kendle

I stand on the shore.

My feet firmly embedded in the sand,
The relentless wind on my face.

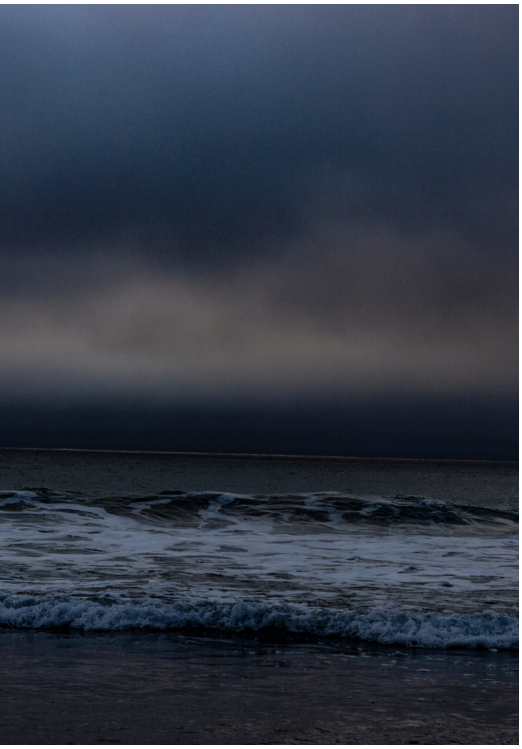
The fresh breath of the Arctic,
Blown down from another coast far beyond the horizon.

I can taste the salty tang of the sea on my tongue,
Feel the sea spray crystallise on my cheeks.

Above me a lone gull screams mournfully into the clouds.

The winter tides churn up mountains of frothy spume
And spew up a cacophony of flotsam and jetsam.

In the wildest of tempests the waves will throw themselves
At the tiny grey cottages that cling to the coastline like limpets,
Leaving behind masses of shingle that trickle down the slate roofs.



The shore will be re-forged through these storms.

New rockpools will be formed,
The sands shifted,
The giant lumps of granite will migrate,
Leaving a new world to be explored in the spring.

I look out at the horizon,
At the sea which fed and shaped my ancestors.



Generations of hardy fisherman
And even hardier “guttin’ quines”
Who eked a living from this inhospitable land
In the furthest corner of Scotland.

I admire their resilience,
Aware that it is this determination that has led to my existence,
That this same resilience courses through my own veins.

I will stand for a few more minutes.

Watch the gentle sun glitter on the silvery waves,
Listen to the haunting song of the seals
That poke their heads out of the icy water,
Inhale the almost sweet smell of the seaweed
Rotting on the sand in the last of the summer sun.

For my heart too beats to the ebb and flow of the North Sea.





Glacier Swim

Untitled

by Laia Buchaca

i.
the bottom of the sea illuminated
as a narcissus flower sprouted
from a seed we buried last winter
and i blushed, but only in eternal white
your love had become a leak of liquid gold
in the depths of the arctic ocean

ii.
she went through a wave
so she could inhabit it
like a palace of crystal
and it left an imprint of its motion
somewhere along her rocky coasts

iii.
it was still early when the sun shattered
and sent a million flickering lights through the sea
when you parted, a marine foam kissed the borders
of the bed you left on the sand
and the flaming crystals danced with the tides
as they carried your silhouette



An Anniversary Gift

by Rohee Shah Dholakia

A long time ago
I used to walk by the
Ocean
Every day
hoping to find the things
I'd lost
along my way

Today I wish to write about my friend
who lost her ring in the ocean
and think of all the things people
lose and find at the shore?

Sunglasses. Wedding rings. Billet-doux. A heart.
Slippers. Memories. A kiss. Nails. Swimming bottoms. Hair Ties
Bric-a-brac Other people Present– Past and — Future

My friend lost her ring in the ocean
and
I lost
myself

I ask my husband,
"What are you going to gift me for our anniversary?"

He brought me something
which
doesn't even matter –

one of the things I am going to
\\lose// at the shore
one day

I
give him
a good chunk of me —

shells, sea weeds,
carcasses
of dead animals
under the sea and
a white, salty kiss

My parents gifted each other themselves

"My love, I brought an entire ocean back to you
as a gift and found my sea -

Let us write our names on wet sand,
and
forget ourselves
again."





Psalm 7a : Samudra Manthan

by Abhinav

(For Muskan)

what does meaning mean in a land of silence?

I

man walks up to the shore and picks up an abandoned shell-
hollow- in the image of God- ants on his tongue, salt in his
sentences, his metaphors lead him nowhere.

we left the city at daybreak. there was nothing left to chew there-
except smoke and eulogies of the dead for the living. the city
is a graveyard. we were headed to the horizon but the ocean

stood in our way like a God whose prayers had gone unanswered
long enough for him to end up an atheist. abandoned shells
trapped in immortal plastic. an expanse of no response.

our metaphors lead us nowhere

II

the sun was right over our heads, nowhere near the center
of nothingness. it gave the sky its colour, water its glitter,
took oblivion out of the silence. waves were crashing
at our feet. we were one with infinity.
your collarbones glazed with sand curved
in the shape of home. your thumb on my lip-
all we need
is a little faith
in each other
and ourselves

your tongue against my tongue, our eyes closed in prayer-
waves invited us into the fore, water caressed a stony shore-
and we made our promise to eternity that there must
be life, there must be songs. that the flowers must
keep on blooming and the stories must go on.

III

the peninsula appeared at the crack of dawn
right when the dinghy had started to dwindle,
little girl ran her fingers through the gurgle
of the ocean we'd later name after its shore
she picked held it against the crimson sky
and named the stars after our mothers–

on the shore our children built tombs of sand
and temples of stone. even God was there;
her silence bearable. and the ocean looked up
as a mirror upon a sky that had nothing
to be ashamed of. when God breathed her last
and receded to the ocean, meaning diverged
from metaphor in the favour of silence-
as a placeholder, we picked up stones
and scarred each other. *for a misunderstanding*.

IV

the lines were already there etched in sand,
when I made my way from my mother's womb,
they told us that's what we were meant to be;
a story knitted in barbed wires and bullet wounds,
so we played our part and collected our wages,
the ocean embraced our dead and spat back
on the living. the sky was dark with shame-
the ones who left to fight were never seen again,



we all felt something was wrong but
never wrong enough to make anyone budge,
in the ocean we dumped our blood and sludge.
we were too small to know the larger scheme
of things they said. there were national interests,
international commerce and profit margins at bay.
so we fought their wars through the day,
and watched the night sky fume with smoke,
it was all for something. for someone. not us though.
but the day my lover died stuck in the barbed wire,
my enemy lost his son to the same quagmire
and we wept under the hollowed sky,
like children whose childhood was denied,
as we watched the waves caress them to sleep.

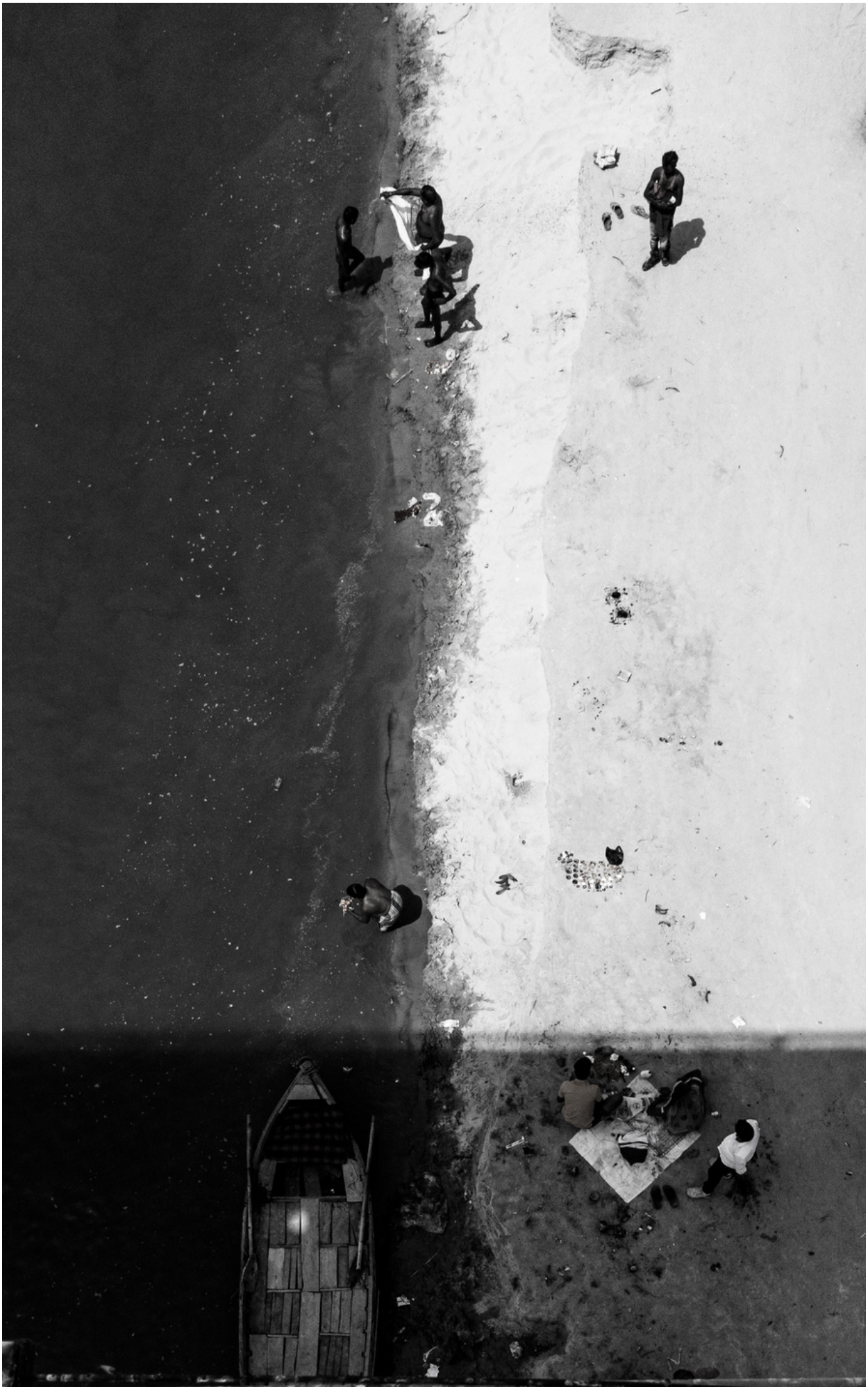
In the beginning was the ocean
In the end mere thirst

V

lines were washed away with blood,
there was nothing left in that city but silence
of broken promises and shattered dreams-
the city was nothing but a graveyard,
so we left it at daybreak for the horizon
to start over again but the ocean
lay distraught in front of us like a mother
abused by her own children-

my enemy; alone, his arms empty, walked up
to the shore and picked up a forsaken shell,
hollowed in the image of God-
we stood on the lip of silence
and watched the shimmer of a setting sun
kiss the sludge one last time-
we called it inevitable we called it a mistake,
but time had passed us by- *too late* it said.
and our metaphors led us nowhere.





In conversation with
Sarita Fernandes



SARITA FERNANDES

Public Policy scholar with specialisation in maritime and coastal policy. Academic and field experience in climate change, conservation management, conflict-peace dialogues, policy gaps in governance of climate-action plans, biodiversity and coastal ecosystem-service management. Skill-sets in policy development, policy analysis, equity and advocacy in the blue economy, hazard risks of sea-level rise and nation-state economic transitions for adaptability and mitigation. Professionally trained in public policy, business management, international relations and foreign policy.

You've always advocated that the indeterminate nature of the sea is best comprehended by those who have known its depths by residing in its peripheries, the local and tribal fishing communities, who venture into the sea not recklessly but respectfully. We're curious about when and how you stumbled upon your very first opportunity to interact with the indigenous fishing communities. And in a field where researchers are often seen contributing from a distance, what made you engage further with the intrinsic values that bind the lives of such communities?

The fishing communities in Bombay have always been a very integral part of the city's life as well as its society and culture. The city is replete with statues, symbols and other material aspects that show the presence of an indigenous community thriving within it. It was, in fact, during my Master's Degree and during my dissertation specifically, when I got the chance to speak to the communities. I got to know how most of them have acquired education in highly technical fields such as Electronics and Instrumentation and even law, equipping them with an ability to protect their fishing grounds, villages, and a continuing legacy of craft and method.

Surprisingly, the first time I interacted with a fisher was in court. I was more moved than surprised to witness the time and energy with which they protect their resources, coastline and livelihood. To them the ocean is sacred. Beyond their livelihood, they are the nicest people I have interacted with. Even if the community as a whole appears unapproachable, they provide the warmest and most inclusive space. Sometimes you can inevitably judge the book by its cover without even opening it. I think I have been blessed to get to know the people from the community quite closely, who have generously offered me to show their culture, share their stories-something that has inspired me to further document, engage, and do justice to their struggles.

You've worked alongside closely knitted groups of marine enthusiasts, and NGOs that have facilitated intensive research projects and with policymakers; from that position, how will you assess the attitude of the state in bringing light to the dialogue of marine life conversation?

We need to consider the attitude of the three major states on the west coast, namely Maharashtra, Goa, and Karnataka. Their perspectives still have a colonial undertone which is unable to grasp the importance of the ocean. The coast is another piece of land, meant to be commodified with the sea as an imperishable resource-ever ready to take in whatever we throw in.

There has been an advent of good quality research within various institutions of our country, however, the problem arises when that research has to be moulded into policies related to specie recovery and their consumption statuses. There is a huge gap between the two. Science rarely ever translates into policy making. The apathy of the administration and policymakers becomes very visible while operating in a huge and diverse country like ours. Stakeholder mapping is very integral to understanding how we can draft equitable policies and devise appropriate mechanisms for compensation such as state-led assistance.

Your captivating research on the effects of reclamation activities scheduled under the Coastal Road Project on the intertidal marine biodiversity of the western coastline of Mumbai has garnered attention nationwide. The threats range from complete loss of livelihood for small-scale fishermen to endangerment for nearly 340 species of intertidal marine wildlife. What constitutes the biggest challenges when dealing with such developmental motives?

When it comes to developmental motives, the biggest challenge is to tackle a perspective that gives no room to listen to ideas, suggestions, or a potential change in design. It stems from a very monarchical method where once what has been decided can not undergo any change whatsoever. People need to play a very huge role in this. Ultimately, democracy is all about the power of the people as we have seen in the farmer's protest, and during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Protests happen and sometimes they are difficult to handle in terms of cost but in Bombay at least, the biggest challenge has been unawareness from its citizens. Even today, a lot of people are unaware of the implications of the coastal road nor do they take a great deal of interest in why the entire city's sea view is marred with yellow boards. If the people had known the nerves of the city, seen it from a different lens, and explored opportunities to better it, I don't think a lot of people would be using the coastal road when there is a metro being built parallel to it. The local trains are also improving. I hope that a statistical survey is conducted as a lot of people are moving out of the city. A highly skilled and young workforce is moving away because of the terrible public infrastructure services. So, the unawareness of coastal roads among the citizens and the apathy of the monarchical method used by leadership in terms of the policy is the biggest challenge.

As someone who has previously led the Goa Sea Turtle Festival, why, according to you, are such immersive projects necessary to fulfill the aim of creating actionable grounds alongside disseminating awareness?

A more important question would be, how far can the sea sustain such gatherings that are turning towards providing both experiential and experimental results after the pandemic?

Awareness is also an issue when it comes to sea turtle nesting habitats. There is a lot of hostility attached to it because turtles require a pretty large portion of the beach to be able to nest. This often does not sit well with a lot of people who want access to that area to build shacks, water sports, establishments-temporary or permanent. etc. That is one of the biggest reasons why we have the festival to show why the turtles require a designated space to be able to nest. The festival is intended to be experiential and experimental. Most of these activities are done on the beach, but because of limited space, security reasons, and access to the beach is limited for a lot of people coming for the first time, we try to have it in many other areas as well.

While carrying out research work in Morjim in Goa, you resided near a turtle-nesting beach for quite a while. Our readers would love to know not only your experiences but also your observations about the cultural practices of the nearby communities. What strikes as the major differentiating factor between the interactions of those native to the area with the sea and those who are practically present for extracting from it commercially?

I lived in Morjim between 2019 and 2021. It was one of the most challenging as well as the most wonderful years of my professional life. Morjim is a village in North Goa and it is cut off from a lot of facilities and amenities. During the pandemic, we witnessed issues with basic needs such as groceries and realised how the needs of the people were put on the backend as compared to those who were closer to more populated areas such as Panjim or connected spaces like Anjuna, Vagator, and Candolim. Cultural contributions have always been very rich. The village has its history of stories. Of course, some natives have now acquired an extractive and exploitative outlook. I think their relationship with the sea through familial stories considering how the sea has sustained generations of such traditions needs to be revisited. I think that's the main difference that I see between a native from Morjim and across these three states versus someone who wishes to use the sea merely to extract something out of it.

What would be your advice to the youth who are willing to work towards the preservation of natural heritage?

My advice to young people would be to first, understand the needs of what they are working towards. It is very important because when we come aboard as young people, inevitably we follow our needs. We recognise that we approach a project with certain ideas that we come equipped with. We crave to implement them. Those are, in a way, our needs. And those may never entirely or not always translate into concrete action. The communities' needs might not match the needs of the area of biodiversity or the habitat's needs. So I think it is very important to note down what you want to do and attune it to a personal reality check in terms of what the actual needs of the community look like. Secondly, be mindful of your wellness and health. The space of conservation and preservation is tiresome and demands an immense amount of devotion. There will be long campaigns and to sustain through such long campaigns, you need a good healthy mind and body. So, do take care of yourself.





Ishmaelian Communion

by Rose Menyon Heflin

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Like Ishmael, the sea has always called to me. Even as a landlocked child, long before I ever saw it, I was wholly enamored.

Beginning in about first grade, I used to check out books on oceanography from my local library, enthralled by the images of the mysterious underwater world. Starting even earlier, I collected seashells, reveling in the variously whelked textures of shells bought at a dollar store in Clarksville, Tennessee, the city just across the state line from my rural Kentucky home, and considering those sent to me by an aunt in New Orleans especially precious. As an adult, the ocean still calls to me, not as a place for sun tanning and fun, but as a mecca of spiritual communion with nature.

Seashells cast to shore -
Precious, persistent, humbling -
In gentle rhythm

Sadly, my half-brother from my father's first marriage had drowned while staying with my parents before I was born, sending my father into a downward spiral of alcoholism that would forever haunt the family, even after he sobered up. As a result, though, I was never allowed to get near water, and growing up poor in a rural area without lessons readily available, I never learned to swim.

However, the ocean beckons nonetheless, as do creeks, ponds, lakes, and rivers - all of them so filled with life that, in the ocean's case, it practically regurgitates it onto shore. Consequently, every time I'm near, I must visit. The last time was the fall of 2019 in Monterey on a Sierra Club service trip to Fort Ord National Monument. An unlikely pairing, Doug, an old white-headed Vietnam vet, and I hit it off, becoming good friends, and we spent our day off work for the week driving around seeing the sights, appreciating the beauty California has to offer.

Wholly enamored
Enthralled with Nature's splendor
With pulsating waves



Somewhere along the famed 17-Mile Drive, at a gorgeous overlook, I spotted a steeply-staired trail down to the sand, and of course, I asked if I had time to go. Doug jovially agreed but said he'd wait behind at the car. So, on my still sore ankle, which I had sprained badly the previous month hiking Red Rock Canyon, I gingerly made my way down, at times on my ass, but I made it to the water's edge.

That deep blue beckons
Irresistible siren
Beseeching my soul

Determined to touch the Pacific again at last, but not wanting the hassle of removing my hiking boots, I bent down between two large rocks and let the water rush coolly through my hands, the tide ebbing and flowing with a steady rhythmic hum, as a sort of inner peace stole over me. Eventually, I reluctantly straightened and, content, climbed slowly back to the overlook.

Through my fingertips
Gently frothing whitecaps dance
Tugged at by the moon

I am not a believer. I would go so far as to say that I am anti-religion, but in small moments like that, lost to the natural world, I, like Einstein, could swear there is a higher force at work, just waiting for its masterpiece to be truly appreciated by the humble viewer.

Simple yet complex
Communion of land and sea
An unlikely pew



As we await the Ocean's Fury

by Shagun Das

Climate change is often most promptly associated with "decline." Deforestation, extinction, and scarcity of resources are all forms of declension borne out of the climate crisis. But the Ocean?

The Ocean is on the rise. The fear for the ocean is not that it will disappear, but that it will rise and engulf all that remains. The sea level, according to research, reached a new record high in 2021, rising an average of 4.5 millimetres per year from 2013 to 2021.

I often hear accounts of how the beach was farther away or how the sea was not as deep or wild as earlier. But, when one lives in a city with beaches, resisting love for the sea becomes daunting. The far-reaching blue, the sound of the waves, and the heavy, salty air become your home, and you miss all of it when you're away.

This nostalgia emanates with distance, but when you are standing on the shore, gazing into the horizon, you are bound to feel small, even inconsequential. While reading 'The Great Derangement' by Amitav Ghosh on the seashore, a rather thrilling experience I daresay, it is precisely what I felt.

As I read about the imminent threat that lay in the ocean basin, the sound of the waves simultaneously played out in my ears. I listened carefully, trying to figure out if the beach was in good spirits that day. In his book, Ghosh challenges the belief that the planet is inert. I agree. I refuse to believe the ocean, or any other part of the ecosystem, is inert. Particularly on days when there are high tides, you feel the sea rumbling with power– the waves lashing onto the shore as if expressing their rage over the ever-expanding garbage dump in the ocean. But the sea is also kind. Because farther towards the horizon, where it houses its creatures, it is quiet and an emblem of serenity.

A shiver passes through me when I think of the ocean's rage. I remember reading somewhere that the sea retreats before rising into a tsunami. I look for signs. I pray that the impending disaster comes with some kind of warning, but I am brought to realise that we have had enough warnings already.

The eastern coast of the country has seen a major rise in the number of cyclonic storms over the past few years. Flooding in Pakistan and parts of India has brought lives to a standstill.



In January this year, Indonesia passed a legislative bill relocating its capital from the sinking Jakarta to a new city on the island of Borneo-Nusantara. The "Great Derangement" that Ghosh talks about is here already. The most vivid of its images strike me when I face nature in its fiercest forms, and in my head, these are the Ocean and the Rain.

Often in my wildest imagination, I conjure the sight of the usually tranquil waves going haywire, consuming everything in the process. The sequence ends with the roar of the waves becoming synonymous with silence, having drowned out all other noise. This is by no means an overestimation of the power the oceans hold. In the face of such might, what are we to do? How do we not fear this power?

Every year in the city, there is a showcase of naval strength in the ocean. Decorated ships and submarines are available for display, and naval personnels demonstrate rescues and defences while the audience cheers for their bravery. The ocean becomes the stage for this exhibition of power. Nobody notices the reticent sea, its own power hidden under the aegis of human ignorance.

The threat of the impending disaster in the sea is terrifying, yet I can't help but admire its magnificence. As I settle on the sand, digging my toes into it and feeling its warmth, I also stretch my hand towards the water. The water, heavy with salt, gently flows over my palm and draws back only to be followed by another slowing wave. The sea is a quiet friend, at least I'd like to believe so. Yet I'm aware that it is indifferent to it. My love for the ocean means nothing to it. It steadily receives what it gets and gives back what it has. Over the years, it has received the cruellest gifts from humanity, and now we await for what the Ocean has to offer. I'm convinced it is furious, and none of us are ready for it.



Barracuda Meets the Goggle Eyes



Fisherfolk stories from Sungai Batu: between maritime traditions and capitalist modernity

by Daniele Speziale

There was a time when people spoke to the ocean. When fisherfolks, sailing on the waves, could hear whether the sea's surface hid fish beneath its veil, and could talk them into getting caught. On dry land, they could read the clouds in the sky and know whether venturing into the sea would have yielded a good catch. All this might border mythology, but these are the stories I heard while visiting Sungai Batu, a traditional fisherfolk village in the southern coast of Penang Island, Malaysia. While perhaps romantic, I suppose one thing about all these stories must be true: the relationship between humans and nature, back then, must have been something a contemporary, urbanite youngster like me cannot fully grasp.

The occasion of my visit to Sungai Batu, nevertheless, was far from romantic: it was, in fact, part of my research on the Penang South Reclamation, a million-dollar development project which aims at creating three humongous artificial islands right off the Penangite coast. The reason? Create a fresh, new land bank to auction off to privates. The foreseen impact? No less than the destruction of the entire ecosystem, the loss of livelihoods for multiple fisherfolk villages and, consequently, a threat to the island's food security.

In English you'd call it a tragedy - but in the fanciful, mathematical language of constant economic growth, it is called a "stimulus", a "catalyst", "land for development".

And how to define "development", anyway? My intention was to ask this on the ground, to the fishers and villagers themselves. After all, if one is interested in alternatives to capitalism (and I am), uncovering local interpretations of "development", "change" and "progress" should be a top priority. Interestingly, the very first answer was something no development studies textbook (let alone an economics one) could have ever predicted: "If I can have a big family" - said a villager - "and my daughters get married and our family grows, that's good development for me".

Thus, asking and listening (especially listening!) you discover that the ocean is not just part of the fishers' livelihood: it is integral to their very identity. It is their life, in its most concretely political, economic, and cultural sense. In this respect, particularly enlightening was my conversation with Haji Zakaria, the leader of Sungai Batu's fisherfolk. Haji Zakaria is affectionately nicknamed the "fisherman-philosopher", and we (the activists, the community and me) owe it to him that the cause against reclamation is so well articulated.



When I met him, one of my first questions (referencing one of his older interviews) was: *"you once referred to the fishing livelihood as the quest for rezeki halal - can you explain this concept?"*.
He patiently answered: "Rezeki is what God gives us as sustainance, and halal, well, we are followers of Islam, and halal is whatever sustenance we work hard for, and invest into improving our life, but also into helping others".
As he went on, he introduced another, particularly fascinating concept: "here, we follow the principle of fardhu kifayah, that is our communal obligations. We help each other out. We share our rezeki. Because the sea, it makes us all sahabat, companions, regardless of ethnicity and religion".

Digging and talking to more people, I discovered not only how the sea provides the community's rezeki, but how the sea is the invisible soul of local economic institutions. The fardhu kifayah ideal is concretely implemented as fisherfolk villages organize into Units. In turn, the Units operate pasars, that is markets where fishers sell their catch. The (very high) profits are reshared across the community. They are distributed as bonuses proportional to one's catch, or organized into a dana, Malay for "fund".

In turn, the fund provides a number of interest-free loans: scholarships for local kids, financial support for widows, insurance and contingency funds, even sponsors for Muslims to travel to Mecca.

The sea, therefore, is not something *"out there"*. It is the foundation of community-level institutions. It is at the heart of local socio-economic security. But that is not all. The fishing profession, for Sungai Batu's inhabitants, is not just about satisfying financial or nutritional needs. On an existential level, the sea grants them freedom. Whenever fishers are hungry, or need money, they sail on a boat and catch fresh animals. Whenever a non-fisher villager loses their job, or needs an extra source of income, they know they can just show up at a local Unit and the fisherfolk will provide some part-time occupation. The community knows that this is a freedom which a modern job cannot provide and, as such, it is a freedom that they are not willing to give up.

Near the beach, with the waves' relaxing white noise in the background, the fishers gather in the Unit to watch television together, play board games and chit-chat the afternoon away. I noticed that, when their discussions get political, the word "capitalism" has crept into their parlance.



When I first arrived in Malaysia, and met a few local activists, I shared my idea of asking fishers about their views on capitalism. I was told that that would be a lost cause, as fishers did not have much economic understanding beyond the bread-and-butter level. But that turned out to be inaccurate. Local fisherfolks might not have high levels of formal education, sure, and might not give a textbook definition of "capitalism". But they are opinionated, and their own definition matters: it is one based on the damage they see in the ocean, such as water pollution, dead fishes, disappearing mangroves, endangered species. They are aware that their sea is sacrificed on the altar of real estate development, and know that the profits go to a small elite. Thus, a silent local critique brews in the foamy sound of the waves.

With regard to capitalism - and I'll conclude with this thought - I too realized something. I realized that we sit through entire university classes, lengthy readings, and debateful seminars studying what capitalism means or entails. But if you open your ears to the silent weeping of a landscape on death row, like Sungai Batu's coastline, the meaning of capitalism becomes clearer than in any university classroom.

It means pushing a traditional, self-subsistent community away from its land, and forcing it to depend on the market for its own sustenance. "Never mind if fisherfolks cannot go hunt at sea anymore, the fish can always be imported" - so reason the developers, not questioning how paradoxical it is that a tropical island should be importing fishes from elsewhere.

In today's world, it is incumbent upon all of us to reevaluate how we understand the ocean, and all nature: is it a machine for infinite economic growth, or is it a site of freedom and rezeki (blessings), that makes us all sahabat/companions?



Gulf Stream Awakening

by Valerie Anne Burns

It was in a green salty sea where I sought to fill large holes of emptiness and fulfill a desire to immerse my young spirit in the magic of a mermaid. That's where I wanted to be—not in the concrete world of hurt and hurdles.

Mermaids fascinate me. They live in the grace of the ethereal and swim free. As a young girl, I had no fear of the ocean. It was my magical place to escape the things I feared. Swimming with confidence like someone who was half-fish and half-girl, I could be a mermaid.

Key Biscayne, in Florida where I grew up, is a small, quiet island near the big city of Miami. Balmy beauty was a daily gift there. All those years ago, my island paradise provided white sand beaches and clear tropical water where my toes were visible in the sandy bottom.





Eventually I'd have to walk out of the ocean, to places of shifting sands, where I lived in caution. I envied mermaids and the secrets they held while swimming through the oceans of the world without having to stay exceptionally long on any concrete landscapes—the places where wounds are endured.

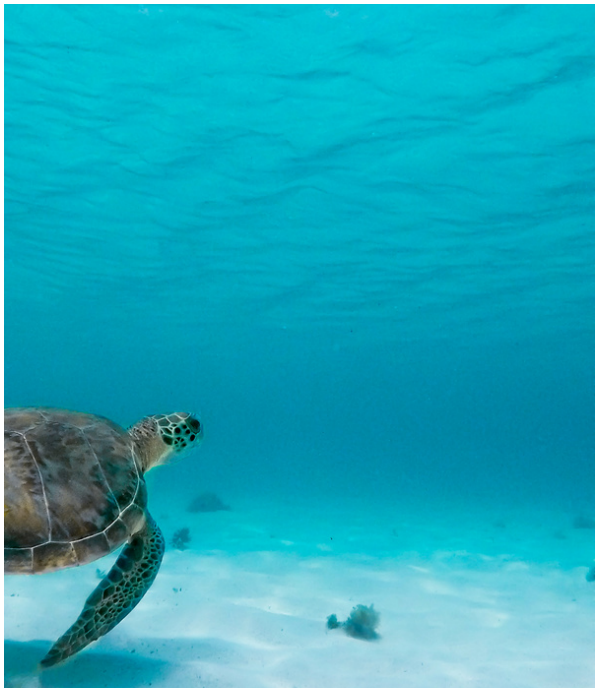
Walking or submerged in saltwater, I've uncovered treasure and found intrigue swimming through the waves of life.

I embarked on an adventure when I was a teen freshly in love. I traveled over the Florida Gulf Stream that became a turning point in my young life. My boyfriend and I took the Boston Whaler, a boat we usually used for skiing and lobstering in the calm flats nearby, from our local yacht club. We launched it, and the shore I was familiar with grew distant.

A new thrill overtook me, and I liked it. And then, a stillness fell over me.

After a few hours, the ocean turned blackish blue…and it became very deep. We'd passed into a dark ocean but beneath the waterline, creatures were being free in their element. Tuna and swordfish jumped out of the water in marvelous displays of life force. I'd only seen these fish before in a kitchen. On a plate for dinner.

We moved deeper into the Gulf Stream further from any shore than I'd ever been. I was mesmerised by the sky deepening from a friendly blue to violet. Cottony clouds transformed into one big threat, enfolding us into another world The safety of Key Biscayne was far from sight.



A new thrill overtook me, and I liked it. And then, a stillness fell over me. Wrapped in these thoughts and the mystical surroundings, I had a powerful desire to dive into the waters and drift forever in its daytime yet midnight blue mystery…to become a mermaid at last.

I was suddenly alive. I united with the sea, air, and ocean life. Everything else slipped away as my body and spirit were pierced with a good, and a sharp, sensory awakening.

The two of us, drifted further into the strangeness of the ocean. The floor below us was full of ancient stories and shipwreck treasures. Thoughts of time long gone, the lives of other seafarers and wandering mermaids on these waters through history, stormy dangers, and other natural disasters, filled my head until my body spoke. Wearing a skimpy bikini, my golden tanned skin now prickled from a chill.

A swordfish, larger than our boat, jumped from beneath the waves to show off by touching the sky. That magnificent fish shimmered shades of gleaming purple before splashing back down to create spectacular waves.

The modest boat rocked hard in the ripple effect. I willed my hands, grasping the sides of the boat, to stay safe. In such a vulnerable place, yet in a precious moment where all my senses were signifying, I was aware of my need to be open, adventurous, passionate, and free—no matter how huge my fear.

I turned my attention back to my boyfriend. He was the perfect likeness to Romeo in that film by Franco Zeferelli. I caught his excitement and love for me in green eyes God surely created to torment women—eyes that hypnotized my teen heart. He held my gaze as his eyes turned emerald from the hue of the deep-sea water. His thick, wavy, deep brown hair blew back against the horizon.

His muscled, tanned body held a strong command of our shared vessel as we navigated the unpredictable waters. I noticed a sly smile I hadn't seen before.

"This is where the Bermuda Triangle is supposed to be," he said. My head swiveled out to an ocean with no end. I grasped the sides of the boat again and closed my eyes to ease an excited heart.





That moment was the beginning of my journey as a restless soul. I was seventeen at the time and was already damaged by loss and other hardships. I yearned to discover that life could be exquisitely dramatic and inspiring, but I also saw that it would be far easier to be less acutely aware of everything and everyone around me.

Since childhood, I've been able to sense and take on the suffering of others. It is exceedingly difficult for me to be content with "what is" because I know there is always more beneath the surface. Longing for reality to be as I imagine it could be is a nagging ache that runs from my soul into my bones. As the decades of my life continue to pass, my quantity of hope swings from being vast as the sea to as small as a grain of sand. This longing, this hope—each come from a place in me that seems infinite.

Crossing over the Gulf Stream became my metaphor for life. The boat—my body. The ocean—my heart and soul. The sea creatures—life itself. When I find myself in the middle of a "Bermuda Triangle", my curiosity rises to beat harsh challenges and overcome the unimaginable.

I contemplate the idea of a divine plan, and how all the pieces of the puzzle I've seen floating in the Universe may come together to deliver a single message of simple clarity.

Come swim through the waters with me.



Against All Odds

The Pacific story from Hamamatsu

by Aditi Yadav

"You know what the Mexicans say about the Pacific? They say it has no memory".

The scene from Shawshank Redemption flashed through my mind as I deboarded the bus. A few steps down the road, a rock jutted out with fancy Kanji engraved on it-田島砂丘. I had finally arrived at Nakatajima sand dunes, my nerves jangling from a long day of battling city buses. My plans to watch an idyllic sunset on Hamamatsu's Pacific coast had gone kaput. The evening sky had segued into the hues of indigo and black. Stray stars and gibbous moon sniggered at my plans.

Am I really a person with plans?, I wondered. Don't I ride the waves of my fancies, whims, and irrationalities? I had spent the entire night binge watching K-dramas. Insomnia is hard to tame. At around five in the morning, sans rhyme or reason, my haywire neural network yearned for a trip to Nagoya.





A few minutes later, like a human possessed, I found myself pulling the little chestnut suitcase down the street to catch the Gumyoji subway train for Shin-Yokohama. However, at the Shin-Yokohama station, my auditory receptors overheard some random Japanese saying '浜松まで' (to Hamamastu). In the meanwhile, my mental processor went berserk, "Yokohama-Hamamastu; where one ends, the other begins- 'hama'; how romantic. Eeee ne!!". A bizarre anime-like scene thus coaxed me into buying a Shinkansen ticket to Hamamatsu.

My thoughts zipped through the prefectural transition from Kanagawa to Shizouka on the bullet train. In Japanese, the word hama means “beach” or “seashore”. The kanji for Hamamatsu reads- 浜松 , “a combination of beach and pine”. The city is home to automobile mammoths like Honda and Suzuki. Its Nakatajima sand dunes, one of the largest in Japan, gaze agape at the Pacific Ocean. Oblivious to the verdant green scenery whizzing past the train’s window, my mind was a seagull surveying the ocean. The vision beckoned me like no other – the passionate duet of wind and surf, the dance of the sun’s dying golden beams on the wild waves of the Pacific, flirtatious farewells and desperation as the swell crashed on the shore.

Destiny, too, crashes onto the shores of human life in patterns it fancies. Once out of the Hamamatsu station, the vagabond in me caught the bus to reach the Hamamatsu castle. It’s also called ‘Shusse-jō’ or the “castle of success”. It was here that the great unifier of Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu, tasted numerous victories to solidify his position. Like something out of a Ghibli movie, the hill-top castle towered in stolid majesty against the azure skies and white clouds drifting like cotton tufts.





The quaint and exalted castle interiors also housed a museum of sorts. I climbed atop the castle tower observation deck. The scene was ruined by urbanisation. In the days of yore, the Pacific shore would have been visible from there, I thought to myself. As I made my way down the castle staircase, an employee handed me a flyer to another place- ‘Ryugashido Doukutsu’. With the perfunctory ‘arigatou gozaimasu’ and the flyer in hand, I went on to saunter around the royal castle compound. Immersed in Ieyasu’s near invincible vibes, I drifted languidly into old Edo days in the ether of my imagination. Cicada’s summer songs of mating filled the air, but the humidity in the afternoon sun was taxing. Sunset was still several hours away.

I decided to make use of the information at hand, quite literally so. With my mind set on Ryugashido caves I ambled across the road, and life devolved into a rotten comic-tragic series of follies. I was on the wrong side of the road, missing the right bus; then crossing the streets, losing time in matching Kanji characters on my phone with those on street signs and bus stops, asking for help from anyone who remotely knew about the place, boarding the wrong buses, de-boarding them as soon as I realised my folly , only to find myself on an unknown street with no means of conveyance to commute.

After that, I walked to another bus stop, only to repeat the pattern. What a spectacle I'd made of myself! After wasting most of the day, I did manage to visit the 250 million year old limestone caves. Weary of my travels by now, I napped on the steps of a local shrine. Sometime later, I awoke panic stricken, "The sunset, the beach, the sand dunes!". Getting to the beach was another exasperating round of tomfoolery. Believe it or not, I found myself in the same cycle of wrong directions and wrong buses as the sand in the crucial hour-glasses trickled down. You know the story by now. I arrived at the Pacific coast after the death of daylight.

I walked, dazed , past the 田島砂丘 (Nakatajima Sakyu) marking rock. The silhouettes of the last visitors made their exits as I entered the compound. There were no artificial illuminations and understandably so. The beach serves as a nesting ground for the endangered loggerhead turtle. Excessive light and noise can drive them away. I could spot some fences around the area, probably to keep the nests safe.

I walked deeper inside under the night sky, guided by the faint twilight. I could feel the sand crushing under my shoes. Sadly, I could not see the footprints I was leaving behind. Neither could I see the 'fumon' – a special wave pattern etched by the strong winds on the sand. Far in the distance, I spotted huge mounds of sand. River Tenryu transports sediments from the Akaishi Mountains into the Pacific Ocean.

For thousands of years, the dance of waves and winds has been churning up the sediment, building up and designing the sand dunes. I trudged my way up to the crest of the sand mound. My feet were sinking into the sand below. It was amusing– sand particles had found their way inside my shoes. My feet were itching. It was hard to climb up with the backpack while the sand wanted to pull me down. I tried taking my shoes off to travel barefoot. It didn't help much, nevertheless I carried on.



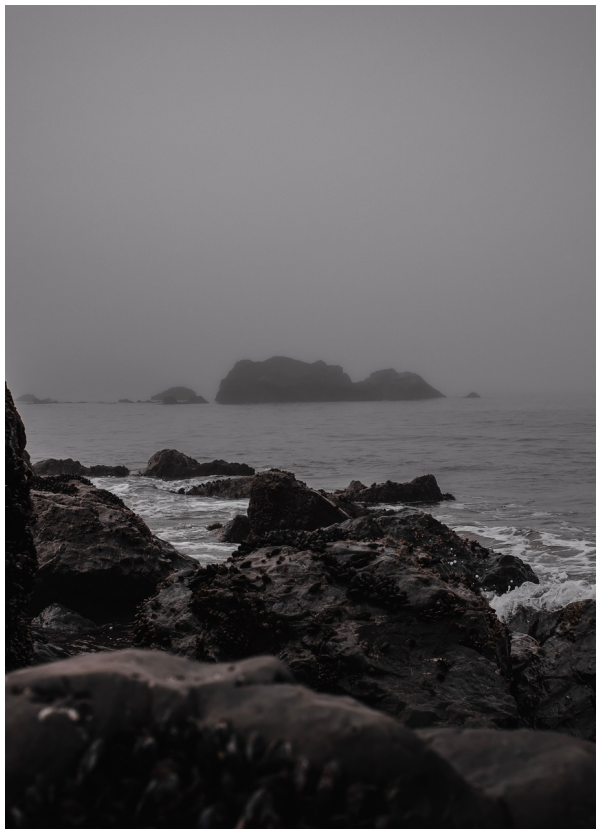
The place was absolutely desolate, save for susurrations of cicadas, sounds of nesting turtles, and other creatures of night. Atop the crest, I could finally see the Pacific in the moonlight! The itching feet, the exhaustion, and the travails of the day– everything vanished in an instant. Gripped with excitement, down the sand dune I waddled. The seashore on the Pacific coast! I was there, at last.

The smoky night sky stretched above me. In front of me lay the vastness of the overwhelming Pacific. The waters were mysteriously dark and grave, divine yet unsettling. Inky skies, inky waters, the boundaries indistinguishable. Suddenly, wild waves, the colour of silver-white and the height of skyscrapers rose up ferociously from nowhere and picked up monstrous speed as they approached the shore. They were white mighty water horses riding on the ocean. Their rage and power sent shivers up my spine. Oh, the roar they bellowed with! What a moment to be alive, to celebrate life, to absorb this raw vitality! Would Poseidon summon his trident and bestow upon me the might of the oceans? In that moment, awe-struck at nature's prowess, tears of reverence flooded my eyes. The salt in the tears, the salt in oceans, the circle of life, the water that makes me, might as well have been a part of the Pacific, I thought, making its way through countless water cycles and up the food chain.

In its unfathomable depths, the ocean conceals creatures unknown to humans. What does a human hold deep within the depths of his or her consciousness? The equine surfs raged on, roared, rode forth and receded on the shore. In a trance, I saw the cycle repeat. I wondered what ocean or sea inspired Hokusai to paint his chef-d'œuvre "the Great wave off Kanagawa". Was it a water horse, like the one I saw?

Or a grander water dragon with ferocious claws, belching hydraulic thunder. Hokusai's art later inspired Debussy to compose his masterpiece "Le Mer," which continues to be a source of inspiration. Art, like life in general, is an inspiration within an inspiration. What, then, is pure originality? I don't know. Nothing, maybe. Just like what Newton said– "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Nature truly is the original eternal giant.

Sometime in early August of 2019, I sat on the shore of Hamamatsu, scoffing at my insignificant existence on this 'pale blue dot' of the universe that we call earth. Still, driven by unbridled joie de vivre, I naively asked the Pacific, "Will you remember me?"





Thalassophobia

by Nyssa Lowenstein

TW: Suicide

I've been thinking about thalassophobia.

Not the shark parts. Or deep sea creatures. But-

I've always loved to swim and am intrigued by the idea of snorkeling. Beautiful underwater worlds where I can be a mermaid of my childhood dreams. Coral reefs seem opulent and colorful (while they last). I would thrive as a gilled librarian in the sunken Alexandria.

This is new. This isn't Natalie Wood fearing dark water her whole life only to die in it. It's more like... Alice? But no white rabbit, no rabbit hole, falling nor changing sizes.

Just open water. You know.

Thinking about it.

I've never really lived near water. I didn't grow up around it. I grew up around over-chlorinated public swimming pools where I saw strangers' naked bodies for the first time in the locker room.

Then, when I was 19, I went on a trip. A trip without actual adult supervision, friends only. A departure into (limited) adulthood. We did what 19-year-olds do. Cliff diving.

Only one of us had done it before. The cliff was high. Very high. Not, hundreds of feet high but. *High*. Looking back 20 feet seems too small but distance is funny in a way that it very well could be more? 40 wouldn't even surprise me. My overbearing child like mind was screaming about the danger. The height was unfathomable and the water was dark.

Whatisinthewater?therecouldbelogsandrocksjustunderthesurfacewe'refarfromother peopleeventhecarhowfardowndoesitgo- We held hands and

Jumped.

It was thrilling and we lived and there were no injuries or drowning.

But I did not want to do it again. Sometimes when you do things that scare you, you can easily do it again, as if you've broken some spell. This was not the case. I had done it and walked away and I wouldn't risk it again.

Here's the thing. Heights? Don't scare me as much. I think there's a natural human part of looking over a dizzying edge where the ground beneath your feet don't seem solid enough to look where you're looking but you know you're fine because the so-and-so was built on good engineering and infrastructure, and has been there for x number of years.

But yeah, not afraid.

Not in planes. Not on mountain peaks. Not afraid of grates on the sidewalk like my mom. Not in skyscrapers.

Don't get me wrong, I don't, like, push on windows in tall buildings, but I'll lightly put my forehead on the cool glass and look down. Mesmerized as long as my central nervous system can take it. But-

It's like, I understand my relationship with gravity. I see the ground. I've hit it before. (Both soft and hard). Gravity and I have a mutual understanding of the danger, we both see the end. We know what happens when a body plunges from a high height. We know the outcome. It's in our contract.

It's not like caves or caverns underwater or above sea level. I do fear swimming in holes because of ledges and submerged caves because of how you can be trapped, confused, and then drown.

When I was 16, I fell through the thin ice of a tiny pond and it was so shallow I fell only as deep as my waist.

It was funny more than scary, but I knew to never tell my parents I did that. It still isn't this.

Something new has been itching me. Out of reach in my peripherals. Breathing down my neck.

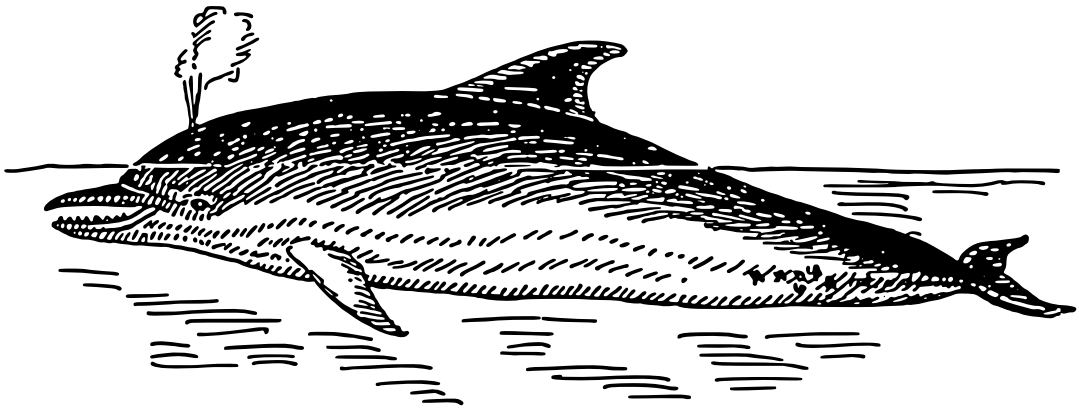
It's-

It's looking down past swimming legs and not seeing the bottom. *There's no - bottom*. I understand in my big rational domineering brain "there's obviously, eventually, a bottom." but- *There is no bottom.*

I can't float to the bottom and push off to race to the top like the deep end of a pool. There *isn't* a bottom.

I *know* there's a bottom.

But how far? How much past my eyesight? How much past sunlight?



It's like falling into nothingness? With no bone crushing consequence? You're floating. At the edge of something that seems like ground- It is flat (mostly). It seamlessly matches with the land and the shore to continue like a watery field. But you don't walk upon it, you fall. But not completely?

You don't fall to the bottom. You're suspended, floating (if you have the strength). Or laying flat with your ears submerged looking only at the blue sky. Muffled sounds of above and below. Endlessness behind you.

I've never liked what's behind me. I've always wished for eyes on the back of my head. But the idea of staring into dizzyingly bent gravity? Dangerous broken contract gravity?

Slow gravity? Resistance-filled gravity? Like as if the air was molasses? Physics in slow motion?

It's sickening to look at vast open emptiness for too long. It's not like the starry sky where you feel small in the universe and far from everything else.

The ocean is like feeling claustrophobic in the most open space possible. It's so -

Deep.

I've seen plenty of nature documentaries, do you know how much of the ocean is open? How much of the ocean is open water with nothing but bacteria and microscopic plankton? It flows endlessly-like watery Saharas? There are 'dead zones' where for thousands of miles, there are no living things. Oxygen deprived acreage. Do you know how far down you have to go to get to glowing animals?

But even then, that's a fear of the dark, and what's in the dark. Not the absence of anything. The Abyssal Zone. Followed by the barely explored Hadal Zone. Named for the greek god of the underworld. Punishing pressure as coming across 6000 to 12000 meters deep.

I understand, there is a bottom.

But deep open blue ocean? You can be lost about which way is up. No ground, no walls. No beginning and no end.

When I was 19, the Awakening was my favorite book. Spoiler- but the protagonist kills herself by just Walking into the Ocean. Naked, she walks and then swims out as far as she can go until she's too tired to return. Dying in the place that gave her her sense of freedom to begin with. I love the visual romantic way humans look in the water. How hair and fabric have no singular master. Elegant. Effortless. Weightless.

Drowning, being overtaken by that instant lung fire and fear seems unbearable but- looking peaceful after?

Or maybe that's how it always is in movies? Whenever I think of these images I don't think of

Down.

It's numb floating just under the surface - close to air or seeming so.

When I was 18, it was recommended that I go to a psychiatric ER for suicide ideation and extreme anxiety. I was there for only 8 hours, 8 hours of numbness, nothingness, and shame. It was only 8 because, if admitted I would have to go to the adult ward. They made the decision that wouldn't be good for me. Time was different there. I could hear the echoes of the ward from my stark-white naked empty room.

The ocean is ‘on average’ 2.3 miles deep. But barely any of the ocean has been explored. Barely any of it has been mapped. Depth perception has a new meaning in water. Light doesn’t act the same. Landmarks for distancing don't really exist. Light bends and is ultimately blocked. The volume of oceans is so vast. The amount of atoms and electrons that make up the ocean. The idea of perceiving the depth is.... Impossible.

I’ve been thinking about that and I guess that is how I am right now.

I have swam out to the deep part.

Except, nowhere near the ocean.

I feel heavy and weightless and numb but ungrounded. Like I’m at the surface of the water and my feet falling but finding no ground. Nothing. Tactile blindness. Begging my eyes to not look. Not look at the scariest thing in the world. And yet,

I look down,

and I can’t see the bottom.




D SOUZA

In conversation with
Tiara Moore



TIARA MOORE

Tiara Moore is a Marine Ecologist, Founder and CEO of Black In Marine Science (BIMS) and the BIMS Program Lead at The Nature Conservancy. She is interested in the interaction between human stressors (nutrient pollution) and marine macroalgae, which lead to cascading aects such as localized acidication. Her current research involves using soil environmental DNA and molecular genetics to assess ecosystem biodiversity as a management practice! She would say she is primarily a lab scientist, but she does love traveling out to my eld sites (no matter how far) and collecting samples or doing onsite experiments.

She is a certied AAUS scientic diver, Science Communicator and Comedian. She is also skilled in using the R data analysis software, and conducting nutrient analyses using color spectrophotometry and ion chromatography.

She is also the founder of A WOC Space providing WOCShops and personalized training to promote an inclusive workplace culture for women of color. www.wocspace.com.

What has been the most academically challenging stage in your journey? Have you ever considered other scientic areas you'd want to explore? What made you stick to Marine Sciences in particular?

I started my PhD at ODU but because I got a C in Physical Oceanography twice, I was dismissed from the program, at that time I didn't know what to do and didn't have advocates in my department so I was left to dry. Luckily I did have allies else where so that's how I was able to move to UCLA. I considered other elds before starting, in undergrad I was pre-med but then I found out about marine science via a eld biology class. I was sold. Even though the challenges I have always been amazed by the ocean and that is what has kept me in the eld of marine science.

Can you tell us a bit about what your current research focuses on? How has the interaction between academic research and active participation in the debate over ecological conservation added to the richness of what you do at BIMS?

My research focuses on human nutrient pollution impacting estuaries and leading to cascading eects such as algal blooms/eutrophication, acidication and biodiversity loss. I also use environmental DNA (eDNA) to conduct ecosystem biodiversity assessments to understand species presence in the face of climate change. In my work with BIMS I am able to ensure the communities we work with and aim our eorts to are the communities most impacted by these climate change and environmental justice issues. By ensuring these frontline communities are educated and included in academic and ecological conservation conversations we remove barriers to access and provide opportunities for community engagement and shared ecological knowledge.

Not only you are a woman; you are a woman of color, hence representing two signicantly underrepresented groups. How can greater diversity and representation act as a tool to combat cultural imperialism in ecological conservation?

Women of Color can be seen as one of the most oppressed groups with gender and race aggressions faced daily, so if we are treated better and receive true liberation it can only get better for everyone else! By including everyone in the conversation we reach the goal of understanding behaviors and relationships toward conservation in general then work together to develop practices and research that aims to honor an uplift cultures worldwide vs a dominant culture that dismisses diversity.

With ongoing racial, gender, and class issues, how can research in marine science still remain a eld largely exclusive of equal representation? Furthermore, why did you decide to focus on diversifying the eld of marine science when other elds in the same niche might require your attention?

I think outside of these issues, marine science in general can not seem as the most accessible eld. Before learning about the eld in undergrad, if someone would have said, do you want to be a marine scientist, I wouldn't have known what it was and I honestly wouldn't have thought it was for me. So just Black people's history with water in general and practices that have made the eld largely accessible, like costs,
have kept the eld largely underrepresented. So with these issues in mind, we are now starting to see more Black people entering the eld and showing younger generations that this is even an option for them. I think that's why I stay and why it's so exciting for me. We are literally honoring our ancestors who chose the sea during the trans atlantic slave trade, by choosing it again. Allowing it not to conquer us but becoming scuba divers, becoming researchers, becoming the people here to save our ocean.

What has the trajectory of change been like for you, speaking from your own personhood and professional involvement in actively confronting racism?

I can honestly say I'm hopeful. Since working with BIMS I experience microaggressions and just daily foolishness 98% less! I feel excited about the work we are doing and the impact we are making. I am also seeing change in other marine science organizations, departments and funding agencies. There are dedicated eorts and money to actively confront racism and I can say people are trying. I don't know how much will change, but I do see people trying. I am more hopeful that these pools of money and resources are available to orgs like BIMS because I know our trying will make a dierence!

Would you like to share with us some instances of microaggressions you have experienced or continue to experience as a Black woman in marine science and STEM, making you feel like an anomaly in the industry? How did you cope with them without allowing them to take a hold of you and undermining your sense of self-worth? The irony must be almost appalling how, despite the focus of biodiversity in public discourse, there is a lack of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Whew, I wrote The Only Black Person In The Room about this. Long story short, yes there is a huge focus on biodiversity while diversity in the eld lacks. This is also a group of people that understand toxic environmental conditions are harmful for the animals they study but not for the people they work with.

Since a lot of our readers belong to the South Asian student community and your work has delved into issues of diversity and representation, what piece of advice would you like to such students with dreams of higher education in conventionally white educational institutions?

Do it! Find the space you need to succeed and make sure you have a community. It can be virtual like BIMS or on campus outside of your department. You may be the only one in the room, but you aren't the only one in the world! Black In Marine Science is the manifestation of all those "only rooms" nally coming together and making a huge splash that couldn't be missed.


aeslinnoel
for SMALL CREATURES SUCH AS WE THE VASTNESS IS BEARABLE ONLY through LOVE
CARL SAGAN



ThinkOcean is an activism-oriented global network of college and high school students dedicated to protecting our planet's oceans and empowering youth to become leaders and creators of change. Through education and action, it seeks to elevate the importance of oceans in environmental discourse and the public imagination, envisioning instead a world where the Ocean is recognized for what it is: the origin of life, the foundation of a stable climate, the hope for a sustainable future, and the inspiration for a better tomorrow.

For readers who have yet to discover this platform, please tell us what ThinkOcean is and how it came about. Can you elaborate upon certain bits of the organization that resonate with your fondness for the ocean or sustainability? (Ben May)

ThinkOcean was initially started because of the decentralized, local nature of most local environmental groups. Millions of young people want to engage with climate and ocean activism; yet, the lack of a mentorship network and resources inhibit action. We started as a pilot program of a collection of chapters at secondary schools across the east coast of the United States. Around a year later, our network expanded across the country and founded chapters internationally. Since then, we have become known for our diverse, global network. Due to our network being widespread, we have been operating on platforms like Zoom to connect across long distances far before it became normalized by the pandemic. Although every country's relationship with the ocean is unique, there are consistent themes found in each country we are present in that demonstrate the ability of our ocean and the sustainability movement to bring people together.

How has it been working in a diverse setting like ThinkOcean? Did cultural diversity enrich the work experience for you? (Ameya Thachappilly)

Working with members from across the world really opens your eyes to new perspectives. The first thing I learnt through all my interactions was to unlearn. It really is amazing to see people from all over the world united by one common cause, and yet bringing something so different to the table. Cultural diversity definitely broadened my knowledge of what working towards the environment can mean for so many different people, and it does inculcate a sense of hope in me.

If you had to give one piece of advice to your younger self starting out in the activism space, what would it be? (Serag Heiba)

I would advise my younger self to focus on building upon the work of others through more collaboration and synergizing. If we consider advocacy as a cumulative effort with an ever-expanding frontier, many organizations spend a lot of time and resources trying to reach that frontier without ever pushing the movement forward to new heights.

Rather than duplicating efforts, it's very important to assess the state of the space you're working in and ask yourself, what can I do to move it along one more step? This doesn't mean every initiative has to be cutting edge, but the end-goal should be to achieve something that's needed that hasn't already been achieved (in your region, your field, your language, your demographic, etc.).

What is your unmatched favorite bit about working with and for Think Ocean? How do you think you're gonna remember ThinkOcean 10 years from now? (Ellie Chang)

One thing that I love the most when working with ThinkOcean is that, when it comes to new initiatives, impact, potential and creativity usually take priority over the availability of supporting resources in hand, such as the connections we've built or the fundings we've secured. This is not very common in my own cultural background, where framework and limitations in reality are highly valued, and are usually taken as priority, from the very early stage of decision making. When I first started to host campaigns on the team, I actually experienced this "culture shock", not being able to think beyond existing resources and talents, overseeing the importance of reaching out to resources we haven't had. In ThinkOcean, obstacles to achieve certain goals do not seem to be viewed as troubles that should be passively avoided, but more like a challenge that may be actively tackled with the power of the team.

This growth mindset has changed not just the way I worked in ThinkOcean, but somehow also the philosophy of my life. All those major decisions in my life all share a bit of the spirit after working with the team, and I would say that's how I am gonna remember ThinkOcean decades from now.

How important is it for younger individuals to be a part of communities like ThinkOcean? How do such associations within the circuit affect the individual sense of purpose? (Ameya Thachappilly)

Something that really goes underresearched and not talked about enough is how helpless a lot of our generation feels about the current status of the world. Especially for young individuals who engage with the climate space in their own different ways, the looming sense of helplessness is something that goes unnoticed. Spaces like ThinkOcean help connect young people across the world and help them create communities that are both safe spaces and spaces that can create change. Communities like ThinkOcean can really facilitate every individual's thought process while creating a larger ripple of change.

How do you envisage the future of sustainability? To what extent do you think organizations like ThinkOcean will have a role to impact and implement change? (Steven Hawse Emalu)

The future is now!
We can nolonger afford to talk about sustainability with out some sense of urgency.
Now more than ever do we have the necessary tools, partnerships, government commitments and wide spread knowledge about the concept of sustainability by most of the people young and old. If you asked me, thats already a good step forward. The next big question is how we harness the already existing knowledge to shape a more sustainable world. This is where organizations like ThinkOcean come in. Their role in shaping a more sustainable world is very imminent because they directly work and engage with the future leaders and gloabal shapers. Organisations like ThinkOcean set the narrative and the youths and teenagers they work with pick up the interests and passions in the topics being talked about. The work these organisations do are the ones that speed up the transition of people, business and organisations towards a more sustaib´nable world and their contributions towards the cause should never ever be ignored but rather supported.

Since ThinkOcean is an initiative based upon the concept of a society run by youth, what is the value of youth advocacy in particular? What unique perspective does the youth bring, ultimately rendering uniqueness to the initiative? (Ben May)

Most environmental groups attribute their work to "preserving the world for future generations." However, ThinkOcean, and groups like it, are vital because we represent that future generation."

However, ThinkOcean, and groups like it, are vital because we represent that future generation. The young people of today will inherit this world – either benefiting from the actions made today or dealing with the consequences. Many of those with the power to enact sweeping changes to our planet will likely not live to see the effects of their work. Yet, we will.

We elevate the voices of future leaders and raise awareness of our shared future. We provide unjaded, passionate voices to an otherwise chaotic landscape. More importantly, we bring global awareness to otherwise overlooked ocean-related issues. Most environmental advocacy works towards addressing challenges to terrestrial ecosystems, generally in a specific country or region. ThinkOcean's uniqueness comes from its ability to leverage its international network to engage with ocean-related issues from the local to global level.

Speaking from your own personhood, have your concerns about the ocean and sustainability changed over the years as you took up professional and solemn engagement with the issues during your time with ThinkOcean? How? (Serag Heiba)

They have, in numerous ways. The interconnectedness of all things becomes more apparent with time, which is both a cause for hope and for worry. A simple example: we can't have thriving oceans without also addressing environmental problems on land. There are no shortcuts in this field. At the same time, that means every step taken to promote sustainability on land also indirectly benefits the oceans. This sometimes leads me to believe that we can't solve anything until we've solved everything, but that's up to interpretation.

Despite the challenges, there's many reasons to be optimistic. ThinkOcean has shown me how powerfully positive impacts compound. Reaching just one more person through our education or advocacy efforts can have a domino effect that impacts a dozen more people over time. I've also seen that an incredible number of people and organizations are genuinely looking for ways to lessen their ecological and carbon footprints and embrace sustainability. Opportunities for engagement and collaboration are becoming abundant, and that is opening up avenues to action that previously seemed beyond our reach.

The vulnerabilities and health burdens of climate change and environment sustainability fall disproportionately upon lower-income communities and communities of color. Despite this, the groups most affected by it are the least likely to be involved in its discourse. How is ThinkOcean attempting to address this? How important is it for their voices to be heard and included in this conversation? (Qudsia Saeed)

ThinkOcean addresses the disparities resulting from climate change by uplifting the narratives of communities that are traditionally marginalized, despite experiencing its notable impacts. Here at ThinkOcean, we believe that when youth is empowered to voice their concerns, we are able to lead a better and most just society and remedy harms that have persisted for generations. It is important that everyone's voices are heard in the conversation around climate change because corporations aim to divide us to reep maximum benefit from the crisis, and to take a community-centered approach to the climate crisis is liberating.

As an activism-oriented global network, what measures does the organization take against falling into the abyss of armchair and, perhaps more a more terrible condition that plagues our society, woke activism? How do you try to be "out there" and doing some impactful work in your field? (Christina Pelliccio)

At ThinkOcean, we make a great effort to enact real change instead of making performative claims "from the comfort of the armchair." In both our educational and service-based initiatives, we seek to make systemic progress that combats existing harms to the environment and mobilizes an entire generation to take action. We place a high value on authenticity and transparency in our work, adding substance to our recommendations for environmental action and demonstrating a genuine impact.

Since the start of ThinkOcean, we have emphasized our vision for a sustainable future, and through our global network of chapters and projects, we work every day to make that vision a reality.

How does the organization stay motivated and ambitious to work in a world replete with problems and growing pessimism? (Christina Pelliccio)

One of the things that I love most about ThinkOcean is our focus and commitment to ocean and climate solutions instead of just the problems. Through our global projects and educational campaigns, we work to acknowledge and learn from the negatives in the environmental space while also promoting the many positives that have been achieved over the years. I would say the community-focused culture of ThinkOcean also makes it easy to stay motivated and ambitious. When you are surrounded by passionate individuals all over the world, there is a shared sense of unity, progress, and impact that is undeniably inspiring.



Contributors

Abhinav is an undergraduate student at Delhi University. His writing seeks to tackle and enquire into the social, political and philosophical issues that call for our immediate concern.

Abhiram Kuchibhotla is an alumnus of the Manipal Centre for Humanities, where he majored in English. He currently handles social media and communications for the Agri-Entrepreneur Growth Foundation (AEGF) in Delhi, India. His writings can be found at Doing Sociology, RIC Journal, Chaicopy, and in the IWP anthology Exodus.

Aditi Yadav is a public servant who dabbles in amateur translation, as and when time permits.

Aeslinn Noel (she/her) is a Graphic Designer & Illustrator from the sunny city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Passionate about making social issues and controversial topics accessible through art and graphics, she spends most of her time seeking inspiration from books, exhibitions, and other artists, and churning it out into new creative works of her own. You can find her curled up with her cat and a mug of tea, or on Instagram @aes.linn!

Anushka Nagarmath is a poet and writer from Mumbai, India. Words have been her safest place ever since she was a child and she wants to keep building safer spaces with them. She was among the Top 30 winners of the Wingword Poetry Prize, 2019 and was longlisted for the AUB International Poetry Prize, 2021. She has previously been published in Liminality: A Magazine of Speculative Poetry, Lucent Dreaming and Songs of Eretz Poetry Review, amongst others. You can catch glimpses of her writing journey @anushkanagarmath on Instagram.

Annette C. Boehm (she/her) is the author of *The Apidictor Tapes* (2022) and *The Knowledge Weapon* (2016). A queer, disabled writer from Germany, she serves as a poetry reader for Memorious and has also authored two intertextual chapbooks available from Dancing Girl Press. Website: annettecboehm.wordpress.com

Constance Edu Baffoe is a Ghanaian poet and writer. She is a member of the Ghana Association of Writers and has engaged in various online poetry platforms to share her works. She has also engaged in some article writings and newspaper publications.

Daniele Speziale (born 1998 in Grenchen, Switzerland) is an Italian student and aspiring writer. Raised in the town of Savona, Italy, Daniele obtained a scholarship to study for one year in Penang, Malaysia, at 17 years old. He has been passionate about Southeast and South Asia ever since, and has volunteered with Malaysian and Indian NGOs. Daniele completed his BSc Political Science at Leiden University in 2020, and is now completing his MSc Development Studies from SOAS University of London. His Master's dissertation revolves around Penang's fisherfolk community, and its strategies to oppose the corporate takeover of their land.

Gaurang Lall is an upcoming photographer whose work is focused mainly on abstract photography and landscapes.

Laia Buchaca is a philosophy graduate who thinks her degree should last a lifetime. When she is not writing ideas for stories and poems on her notes app, you can find her at ballet class or in the kitchen.

Nyssa Lowenstein is a theatre artist, writer, and film producer. She has been published at the Unsealed. She is a graduate of Northern Illinois University with a BFA in Acting with certificates from Yale University and Moscow Art Theatre School. Originally from Denver, she currently lives in Chicago with her fiancée, Adam.

Oussema Fersi is a marine science engineer who specialises in environmental communication and data analysis in the sea.

Prashant Mishra (he/him) is a writer/photographer from Allahabad, India. He has previously made a place for himself in prestigious South Asian literary and art spaces like The Alipore Post, Sahapedia, the Aleph Review, ShabdAaweg Review, to name a few. He has also received a nomination for the esteemed Pushcart Prize 2022. When he is not busy making poor jokes he can be found doom-scrolling on his little Instagram page: @door._.darshan

Rohee Dholakia is a writer, reviewer and an educator based out of Ahmedabad, India. Her work has been featured in The EKL Review, The Usawa Literary Review, The Missing Slate and others. She is currently teaching at Mahatma Gandhi International School and is an expert reviewer at Write the World. She is a member of The Quarantine Train, a poetry collective in India.

Rose Menyon Heflin is a writer and artist living in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, although she is originally from rural, southern Kentucky. Her poetry, which has appeared in numerous journals spanning five continents, won a Merit Award from Arts for All Wisconsin in both 2021 and 2022, and one of her poems was choreographed and performed by a local dance troupe. Additionally, she had a creative nonfiction piece featured in the Chazen Museum of Art's Companion Species exhibit. Her poetry has recently been published or is forthcoming in Abyss & Apex, Backchannels Journal, The BeZine, CREATOPIA, Deep South Magazine, Fathom Magazine, Fiery Scribe Review Magazine, Fireflies' Light, Hare's Paw Literary Journal, among others.

R S Kendle (she/her) is a poet and writer from the north-east of Scotland. She holds a BA Honours in English Literature and Politics from the University of Strathclyde. Her work has been published in several publications including Feminist Space Camp, Free Verse Revolution, and The Survivor Zine. She can be found on Instagram @rskendle.

Serag Heiba joined ThinkOcean in 2019 as its first Hong Kong Coordinator. In the four years since, he has served as its Executive Director and now sits on the Board of Directors. Serag has represented ThinkOcean and Egypt at various UNFCCC climate meetings, most notably the 2021 Youth COP in Milan. Serag is in his final year of study for a degree in Energy and Environmental Engineering, the greatest outcome of which is the lesson that his future lies in writing and not in engineering.

Shagun Das (she/her) is an undergraduate student at Miranda House majoring in Political Science and Sociology. She is most at peace when reading Amitav Ghosh or listening to Pasoori. Her current goal in life is to be able to afford the Six of Crows merch and that's all.

Valerie Anne Burns is an emerging writer. Her piece "Flying Nighties" from her memoir Caution: Mermaid Crossing was included in Chicken Soup for the Soul: Tough Times Won't Last but Tough People Will (2021). She has published two essays in HerStry Literary Magazine: "Venice Vision" (2020) and "Your Bed" (2021). She has also contributed her piece "He's on Top of the World and I'm Not" (2021) in Libretto Magazine. She received a 2021 Finalist Award from Page Turner Awards, and was awarded scholarships to the 2019 Santa Barbara Writers Conference and 2016 Prague Summer Writing Program. She has previously worked in Hollywood as a story editor and in production.

