

*The ocean dreamed me again last night.*

*It dreamed my body grew into existence with bursts of phosphorescent shades of blues and greens. Milk white seafoam swirled and clung to my newborn flesh; caresses it with a mother's awed touch.*

*Mindless, I floated beneath the cool azure waves, while sunlight, broke like crystal above my eyes.*

*A whale song drifted up from below. The haunting grace dove into me with a shuttering pain that tightened my chest. I gasped and water flooded my mouth--stung my throat, my lungs. I coughed--writhed--reached out and the ocean cradled me.*

*It dreamed it needed me.*

The taste of salt lay heavy on my tongue when I woke up. I rolled out of bed and stumbled into the bathroom to spit the sand from my mouth. Red, blood-shot eyes stared back at me in the mirror.

"Damn." I pulled a handful of hair to my nose and sniffed. It smelled like seaweed.

A minute later, hot water sluiced over the top of my head. Long strands of black hair clung to my chest and back in limp locks. Drop by drop, the night fell off of my body. Half-an-hour later, after I'd scrubbed the itch of salt from my skin, I dragged myself into the kitchen.

Mom rushed to stuff a pile of papers into her leather satchel.

I set down my cereal bowl and she glanced up then did a double-take.

"Are you feeling okay, sweet?" She squinted behind her wire-rimmed glasses. "You're not having those bad dreams again, are you?" She abandoned her papers and cupped my chin to tilt my face towards the pot lights in the ceiling.

"No, mom." I pulled away from her touch. "I didn't have any bad dreams." I'd given up trying to explain that it was the ocean dreaming of me, not the other way around.

"I can call Dr. Haggerty and set up an appointment."

God no! The last thing I wanted to do was waste another two hours of my life in Dr. Doofensmerchz lair.

"Pass."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm. Fine." She made no secret that she wanted me back on the drugs. I'd rather not threaten her with Dad again, but I wouldn't let her put me back in to the fog of anti-psychotics. If she tried, I really would move out.

Her cheek twitched. I knew she wanted to say more, but caught herself and went back to her bag. "I'm working late tonight. You'll have to figure out dinner for yourself."

Big surprise there.

No longer hungry, I put my bowl in the sink. The window stared out, across our yard, down Mission Hill, and out, all the way to the ocean. Even from here, the waves sang a wordless lullaby to my soul.

"What do you want from me?" I asked.

The wind, chilled by the ocean, combed through my hair and among the scent of smog and salt drifted a single broken word. "Ne--re--id."