

Emily Linstrom
FLIGHT FOR VALERI

city :
where wretches on their knees are met
with minimal pity :

Well, who doesn't want to be Gatsby's green light? in dancehalls
I coughed up fire & toad jewels, fooled myself
into thinking decadence was beauty—

but we find ourselves a little bored with beauty,
a little bound to it, a beautiful charge
you wish would grow up already.

How is it so hard to accept
that love doesn't always dress

like Dorian Gray
or say the right words when you need them, I mean
be who you secretly wished you could be?
(how quickly *he* becomes pseudonym
instead of person)

I came to the Graveyard of the Pacific
to bury the boxes of prior selves—
mismatched, fantastic,
and utterly useless;

I declared myself a castaway.
Sometimes, you see, it's necessary.

forgiveness : the strangest of jettisoned cargo :
impervious to all the wretchedness,
the Victorian vocabulary that wears me well :
my body : an outline : a sea to atone for.



Sarah Valeri - *Never Knowing We Sink Side by Side*
Acrylic paint