

New Hunger

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*For Florence
and for my mother
with love*

Odyssey

Sixteen, fearing the queerness you'd hooked,
cautiously, under your heart, you wonder
if this was how Odysseus felt, tied to a mast,
ears plugged with wax, as the ship he captained
tore across an ocean seized by siren, their salt song.
The ache for flesh that wasn't his own, forbidden.

You know how it feels to deafen yourself,
freeze thoughts of want before they warm
on your tongue. The fear that if you were
to unbind your hands, strike out for land,
you might drown ... or you'd reach them,
their chorus singing you in on a lifeline;
a kiss that tastes of the sea.

Faith

When you said *would you rather*
I believed in God or ghosts?

you were really asking if it were possible
to carry on if one of us believed
in something the other couldn't.

How lack of the same faith could be a religion
for new lovers, in those quiet hot weeks
spent in bars, between sheets.

So I paused, then prayed at your lips,
our breaths ghosting on my words.
Neither, I said, *both*.