

Deep Water Sailing
by Michael Beck

We went sailing once
and much to my surprise
she knew both, how to work
the jib and how to open
a salt encrusted heart.

I remember most
how silent it got
on the rolling bow
as we rubbed shoulders,
effortlessly coordinating
our seaman skills,
my two hands pulling
first, then hers
reaching over mine
grabbing at the chain,
until the anchor's flukes
broke the surface
at the crest of a frothy
white-haired wave.

Then,
how she casually touched
my arm and pointed
at the dead weight
bobbing in the deep
sea's water by the boat,
noting how unscathed it was,
knowing that my mind
would finish what mercifully
she had left unsaid:
"Slow down this little craft
of yours, filled as it is
right now with neediness,
with you oblivious
to how useless it was,
letting it dangle like that
far from the bottom
of your ocean of desire."

She encouraged me
then and there
to simply let it go,

and when I did,
my life got anchored
or maybe just snagged
on something big,
a boulder perhaps
or maybe a star.

That was a long time
Ago, and I still feel guilty
that I never thanked her
for going to sea with me
that day and pointing out,
gently, the need
for this simple act
and how the sweetness
of the orchids growing
wild along the shore
is often hidden
by the heaviness
of salt soaked air,
thrown up from a dark,
sometimes threatening,
nearby rocky coastline,
where all my sailing
skills have been
readying me for
years now to go.