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Sea Child

Annalise Eberhard

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get the hook out without the creature biting me. I looked to Daddy for guidance, but he wouldn't face me.

I pressed the knife to the turtle's wieldy throat and dragged it across in a quick, sawing motion. The little thing's struggle was quick and feeble. Its shell was covered in hot, sticky blood and my hands had tiny scratches from its final rally. If I hadn't held the final result in my dirty, shaking hands, I could have almost pretended that I hadn't done it. Daddy only wanted to teach me to eat, instead he taught me how to give up on a lost cause.

Sea Child *Annalise Eberhard*

Whenever I pick spinach from my teeth,
I remember green, translucent webbing
and her salt-frosted hair hanging low and wild
as she sang of watery freedom.

She would greet the morning sun on sea-slimed rocks,
diluting her jagged memories in dying waves
and praying water-logged worms would bury her secrets
in their hidden world under the sand.

I pulled her back to bed with me
and held her close under our patched family quilt—
never letting her leave my protection
and the safety the land provided her.

Slowly, I fell in love with her wind-blown movements,
craving her dry bread and over-seeped tea
as I ignored the neighbor's raised eyebrows and frozen stares—
Because she made meaning of my life.

When she found her skin again, she slipped inside the sea,
consumed by the cold, unforgiving waters
that both gave her life and stole her life from me.
and I am left alone on the rocks. Waiting.