

BEACHHEAD

by Janet M. Ruth

Bright air rushes from the ocean,
bleached by sun, cooled in cumulus shadows,
scoured by sand,
smelling of life—gulls, seaweed, fish, horseshoe crabs.

Bleached by sun, cooled in cumulus shadows,
the air wraps around me treading water,
smelling of photosynthesis, respiration, decomposition.
Lifted from a boiling cauldron in the steel blue depths,

life wraps itself around me.
Bottle-green light gleams behind a breaker,
contents of a boiling cauldron lifted from steel blue depths,
tossed to the pregnant darkening clouds.

Bottle-green breakers
reach up to wed the air,
tossed to the wind and darkening clouds,
a second ocean in the sky.

Reaching up to wed the air,
waves shout to each other,
to the ocean in the sky,
tumble and surge, surge and recede.

Waves shout to me in a hush of noise.
Scoured by the sand,
I stumble and surge, bruised, toward some beachhead,
in a bright rush, grinding and churning from the sea.

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