

# In All of This Blue by Brigitte Lewis

written by Brigitte Lewis | October 4, 2017



On the dock that stuck its tongue into the sound. Against a backdrop of fading light. We stood knowing we were silhouettes. I had long hair then that I wore wavy, braiding small strands with bits of shell. He was tall, kind. I loved him for a time. When I told him it was time for me to go home—to leave the islands shaped like a semi-colon—he asked if he could come along. No, I said. I slipped into the water. The water was still and sunlit and, from below, I could see his figure wavering on land.

On the dock that stuck its tongue into the sound, he kneeled and reached a hand toward me. I took it, but only so I could jump into the water a second time.

Salacia is the female divinity of the sea. She has nets in her hair. She is serene and bright. Full of clarity. Salacia escaped from Neptune when he asked for her hand in marriage, easing into the water and out of reach.

Before the dock that stuck its tongue into the sound we are hiking to a lighthouse. We've failed to consult the tidal charts. We arrive at a slough with the tide rising and try to make it across. We can't. We try. It's too deep and I'm sure I feel stingrays flicking our ankles and thighs. We came so far. We didn't go far enough.

We are hiking to a lighthouse, but we never arrive. Instead, we sleep on the north side of a slough under a sky perforated with stars. The next morning, we leave.

Before the dock that stuck its tongue into the sound, before we are hiking to a lighthouse, we stop a boat in the middle of the ocean. He falls backward into the water and returns with buckets of scallops. I like his way with the sea, that he knows—in all of this blue—where to find what he is looking for.

We stop a boat in the middle of the ocean and, when we start moving again, I feel my hair tangle, tie knots to itself, in the wind. We are surrounded by a school of dolphins. We have everything to learn from them. We are happy, but they are happier. Much later, I drill holes in the scallop shells and make myself a skirt.

When Salacia dove away from Neptune, some say she was trying to preserve her virginity or that she was a bit shy and in awe of him. But these types of stories are tired and most definitely written by men. The story of a woman is always more interesting than this.

When my skin is wet, I am already plural. This must be what it means to be almost wholly water. I catch myself two-sided, mutable, and inconstant. There is already enough of me here. I-as-we get up in the morning and fill our gills. We make a peephole through the seaweed and chart our course. The pull of the current. The suggestion of the moon. I-as-we believe these things.

My scallop shell skirt sways like a wind chime. It is my getaway get-up. I fill my hair with even more braids and trim these braids with even more shells. I roll up my nets and say goodbye. I think that the goodbye sticks, but he calls my cell phone a few week's later. *I'm coming to you*, he says. He thinks he's invented a beautiful gesture, but his gesture is too small, too mundane. A beautiful gesture is ink billowing from a squid. A jellyfish parachuting toward the surface of the sea.

Eventually, Salacia came around to Neptune's way of thinking. Or so the story goes. The records are somewhat waterlogged and most certainly kept by men.

*Don't come*, I say. I have fallen from summer to winter and the water has coalesced into snowdrifts around me. I say it again: *Don't come*. I am not interested in tired stories. This time, when I dive, I dive deep, subnivean, tangled in snowflakes and algae.