

# The Waters: Pacific Blues

written by John Yohe | February 1, 2020



Escaping end of December city madness on the day that is about anything but christ sitting in a bargain off-season deal of a hotel room with a view viewing waves on the beach in the rain and the slow low continuous rumble of the Earth breathing and watching how raindrops absorb like nothing back into the sea as we will be and as we are like waves rising out of nothing and thinking and feeling we're separate from nothing until we fall back into that brief moment—a lifetime—of life which isn't to say the ocean doesn't change doesn't get changed by us and die a little—water acidity up from CO2 emissions and fish life levels down from overfishing (especially Japanese and Taiwanese dragnets) and the Great Pacific Garbage Patch now visible from orbit which is why we need Aquaman even though DC just cut him, not to fight sea monsters from the depths with big teeth but to fight us fight us fight us but yes beautiful grey waves.

Thelonius Monk jamming out of the Cloud onto my computer and out its speakers into my chilly room because I left the balcony door open all night to listen to the waves and rain and wind and a person could go dumb out here listening to the ROARSH—just sit down to listen and watch and never get back up—why would you want to? Why do anything? Else? Except you'd get thirsty eventually I guess though the locals don't seem to feel that way they just complain about holding down two jobs to live out here with all the rich people buying up property and putting up trophy homes but yet last night I hung out at a bar on taco night and open mic jam with guys shooting pool and others gambling the slots and some of us made music and some danced and some smoked weed outside and we all drank and we all had a fuck-yeah great time way more fun than the rich people watching tv and I walked back to my hotel room in the rain in the Earth's breathing and was happy, happier than I've been in a long while and yes Monk's Blues starting—chromatic happiness that is still the blues as all happiness contains and needs the blues to be.

Holed up in my hotel room this rainy grey day I'm not sure I really want to go anywhere else with these waves outside my balcony door because really—once you get out to the Oregon coast anywhere is beautiful—drive south a 100 miles it's still waves on the rocks or cold sand beach to walk barefoot on bundled from the knees up looking for whales or seals or otters or a great white

*tiburón* though I may drive down the 101 a bit and explore Wilderness areas I saw on the map or stay in bed and read Richard Ford or Tony Hoagland or F. Scott Fitzgerald and listen to Thelonius Monk mixed blue with the grey rain and surf, seagulls swooping by and maybe get on the internet and check job openings at community colleges I've seen on my drive down thinking about what living here would be like away from Powell's bookstore and women in black tights when I could run on the beach every day if not hypnotized by the S00SH-breathing sea and the drum solo of this extended version just finished and the horns come back in with the melody and applause because this is live and if you listened—it was quiet—there was a bass solo lower than the ocean's blues.

I came out here to vanish and absorb the ocean blues and greys and Neruda's white *espuma*-froth which you could say I could've stayed in Portland and holed myself up (or down) in my basement burrow in this rain there too but I have this view and this sound—the roar—this rush and this haze in the distance (which I probably always have but can see here where the ocean and sky blur—the fog which entered my room last night and the salt smell blue and a flock of seagulls which makes me think of the band which makes me think of Samuel L. Jackson: "This is a tasty burger" so I'm a long ways from the coast in my mind but now I'm back with another quiet bass solo and a determination to at least think about leaving my hotel room and I was going to say something about my white privilege in being able to drive out here and stay in a hotel with a view but it's off-season and I'm in debt on my truck and unemployed and have about 3,000 in my credit union in which case you'd think I was an idiot wasting my money and I am an idiot though maybe not for that reason maybe just for thinking life is anything but blue and grey and the music has stopped.

Reading Tony Hoagland with hail outside. The ocean stays the same—waves and foam and hail to heavy rain when there was clear sky before—enough to make me think of leaving my cave for the afternoon but now a hot bath and a nap seem more in order here at the edge of disorder on the coast—though which side is the disorder blues? Or is there no edge—no either/or—but and/both? Hammering of hail on windows a wake up reminder—a zen bell without all the bullshit oryoki and overly niceness and no whales this time of year I guess not even any ships though I saw lights last night and fog in the room is cold and colder but I have jazz and blues and poetry and earplugs in case of noisy neighbors and maybe I won't drive down the coast this afternoon, everything is just so grey and blue with rain threads way out at the horizon which I can now see is a horizon and Thelonius Monk with Art Blakey on "In Walked Bud"—trumpet and sax singing together and cheese and crackers for lunch along with OJ and some more warm moroccan mint tea from the front desk—I'll get my money's worth in just free hotel tea though wish I had a woman in sexy panties for maybe an hour then she could go back to her room and read and take a warm bath too and maybe if we really liked each other we could walk downtown and have dinner like real people do together.

Head south out of Newport a half hour and forest comes right out to sea with Dr. Suess-ish pines and ferns leaning away from wind and foam flying up in wind-crashing waves and explore paths and hemlock and giant spruce in a wind

storm with trees falling in the forest and be there to hear them and streams and rivers pouring out of mountains of Cape Perpetua and go down to water to baptize your feet at that edge where fresh flows into salt and ducks and gulls float nearby waiting for fish—sun will come out for moments and rain will pour moments and hail will return and sun and more rain driving back north late afternoon an almost sunset with angel rays on the horizon and they're gone and you're back in Newport driving by fishing boats in harbor because people still do that, still fish though maybe not exactly now end o' december and still no whales neither greys nor blues but sea lions hanging out waiting for scraps and maybe because they like us and think we're funny because we don't kill them anymore and it's christmas eve what're we gonna do for dinner? (as if I had a we—a hot *bébé* to snuggle with) Quick call pizza delivery before seven! Have a hot shower for nothing for the pleasure. Yes and I'll take a bath tonight too!

Coltrane's saxophone in the rain and surf sipping moroccan mint and stuffed on pizza—more people checking into from California and Nevada—young childless couples who can afford to escape x-mas and the poor woman working the front desk tonight just like any other night even though that's what we want, for this to be any other night in America and the world in the wind and rain and saxophone squeaks and yeah man reading books on paper listening to digital cloud music I don't miss anybody and wish my life could be this—travel and anonymous hotels and writing and reading and kickass open mics in small towns and doing readings and attending conferences and comicons and just *on the move*, talking with other writers/artists/musicians with a car that never breaks down and four wheel drive for the (oh yeah, that too) camping and backpacking and swinging by cities where friends live to visit and to have lots of friends would be nice in this fantasy and to know what to write and what about and for people to care and saxophone always in the background with drums to drown out anything I don't want to hear but not too loud because those waves are forever foaming my brain—wind whistling through room cracks and yet I live in a city thinking that'll give me a social life when all it really offers is yoga classes and a zen temple to sit two days a week which I have no desire or need to do tonight with these waves and that wind and that rain and My Favorite Things, which are women's underwear and hosiery on or off them or me and green tea and books of critical (though readable) essays on poetry and a pen and a notebook and grey hoodies and moccasins and bare feet in the sand and wind and rain and waves and the sounds of those things and wool socks on a cold camping night and pizza with crushed red pepper packets and tough Carhardt coats and saxophones and trumpets harmonizing and bass solos and heavy metal drums and feedback and the moon and ten thousand stars and good poems you return to all your life and friends that want to talk about literature and philosophy but also sex and movies and the Grand Canyon and the Oregon Coast and Lake Superior and all the women with nice asses I've ever stared at and the high desert sage and road trips and four-wheel-drive trucks and bicycles and not having a car until I need one to go on a road trip and old-fashioned movie theatres where you stare up at the screen like a religious experience because it is.

Or drive south down the 101 on xmas day and hike up to the Giant Spruce tree 40 feet around and 550 years old and looks it—small sign saying how Indians

used to camp a half mile west but that CCC crews built a path out here back in the 30s and while it's good to know some white men back then valued a tree enough to build a trail to it they were only really building on an old Indian trail and the sign says nothing about why—say—Indians don't camp here anymore which is because white men killed them off but let us—like good christians everywhere—not think about that and instead climb up to Cape Perpetua for the view though everyone else—all the other tourists—just drove their cars but fuck it we're better than them ain't we? And hike back down to shore rocks and Devil's Churn which sounds better than it is though still nice with huge waves smacking rocks and foam spraying in our faces and the sun comes out and everybody's ok and the rain comes and everything is still ok and I'm cold and sweaty and can see for miles to the horizon just like back at Aztec Tower a little with rain patches way out and what else besides Charles Mingus in the Cloud getting crazy and no seals or sea lions or otters or sharks or whales, just humans—you can't escape them really though everyone today has been nice and just said good morning. None of us mentions christmas which is nice like a regular day.

And anyways Pacific Blues was a bluejeans company or should have been so maybe these are the Pacific Greys but after a really actually awful chinese dinner at the only place in town open and *una tradición mía* from long back when I got along with my mother I take a rainy night barefoot walk on the beach, the only person out here which happens a lot to me and which I like—moon sliver showing through clouds, two light ships way out on the water which I understand and if I had money enough to own a boat I'd be there too but that's never gonna happen I don't even own a house—the truck via credit union loan because I keep thinking something will happen, somebody'll notice me and my raging talent and say hey would you like to write for Aquaman? And I'll say hell yes can I make him an environmental activist? Like a radical one that sinks whaling ships? And there will be a silent crackling over the phone and they'll say thanks anyway we'll call you and the hotel where I'm staying is called The Whaler and I'd just end up like Charles Olson living here—crazy guy walking on the beach every day and writing stuff nobody reads except you this now.

Rocky beach in fog cloud, hazy sun dark pebbles and thick sand. White weather-worn logs washed up at tree line. Bare soles on stones and sand. Eagle turns white head and regards me from a tree, his mate in nest tearing strips of flesh off dead critter to feed her baby. Black birds floating out in waves getting dunked but not seeming to mind—pieces of floating wet dark driftwood. One long black shape swimming disappearing. Coyote appears trotting north, stops and looks back. Rattling stones. Boulders rising out of water. Waves smack spumes. Trees fallen from shore, roots pulled right out of ground, leaning over water, old buoys hanging from branches. Rope lengths knotted in sand. One lone gull and two crows digging worms. Tiny spring dribbling out of cliff, small pool, enough to put my face to and lap from like a cat.

Rolling fog losing sun. Cooling breeze keeping mosquitoes at bay. Staring out at the water. Listening.