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Waves (1989)

Mary C. Dunlap

Waves of wanting come up without warning
No current, no shoreline, no tide
Just this craving to hold and hold fast
That rips out the anchor, slaps the boatsides
And sends me reeling off out onto the water
Dream-like these moments
I am suspended
Out here
Dream-like these irrepressible waves
Washing over me, no, through and through me
And now there is an ocean rising in my heart
If there were a porthold or a spyglass
at heart level, a ring of visibility
one could watch me in there
shocked by each wave, taken anew
aback
Learning to swim in unexpected love.
And if I walk down denial street
Down the street of disowning
all these feelings
Walk as far as possible from the sea
Take my spirit as far inland as I can get
Wandering along, gazing into some window,
Doing some daily chore, some business or other,
Going along, then suddenly
I will pick up my hand to my lips
To lick off a small drop of blood
From an irrelevant cut
And the saltsea rises and crashes against
my unbeliever's tongue.