

On Freedom

A pink and torqued heart rolls into itself. Since it is the sound of her own blood she throws it back. The sea takes the empty shell in its ragged teeth, as a wolf worries a bone to find the marrow. A triumvirate in stone, perhaps one mile out, beckons. She hears the tidal refrain: *everything, everything, everything passes*. She swims. The South China Sea is soft. Salt and hope buoy her body as she pulls, pulls, pulls and breathes. She is going to make it, she knows, until she pauses. Exhilaration becomes fear becomes shadow—her sun-sheathed silhouette, now clumsy & large between unknown depths & impossible heights. She cannot breathe. Her muscles scream. The sun burns her shoulders, her proud but waxen wings. She imagines predatory eyes, pitiless & black, surging up to scissor her in two. She looks back, dead even now, between the shore and nowhere.