

BlazeVOX 11

Winter 2011

Alison Lyons

Throw my ashes into the ocean so I may come full circle.

At an hour too early for thieves, when
there's enough room to kick
and to breathe,
the world is having breakfast
slowly
and no one knows how busy I am;

I crawl great distances down
to a science, with a twenty-one year thanks
and a lazy left arm.
and of all the ways I move my body,
this is the most true.

You want to join me, but
maybe you should stick to land.
Your dry hands may not understand
how I like to fall into
a rhythm

and flip like
a trapped animal
pulled out with the tide.

Sometimes I don't want to come back
up for air.

I am content coming
back from the dead
with fast feet,
as if carrying the messages
between earth and sky,
With giant numbers clouding my head
and every
single
muscle
in my body
being put to use.

I like to drag my fingertips while
losing count,
repeating only:
Here's the open side of my palm
and a storm moving in.
I forget where I am at.

Sweat glands swell and
contract and sometimes
I get frustrated
with the inhabitants of my shores,
who un-tie their shoes,
who interrupt:

How do you breathe?

How long have I been doing this?
- in this life?

This is my firstborn.
This is my quicksand.

This fury is thick and ancient.
I remember when childhood dragged,
and an old man in a jumpsuit and
a straw hat bellowed:
you move like the women I used to photograph,
1940 to
1948,

but
kick water, not air,
kick water, not air.

He always told me that I would be
better today than yesterday,
better tomorrow than
today.
I just have to keep getting up.

So stay down, creature,
stay in bed
your keys are exactly where you left them.
You're going for the same dream again,
but I want to be better
today

because, Oh, old habits die hard.

and despite my lazy left arm
that drags,
my breath only
to one side,
I can not stick to land.

somewhere in the middle
the silence is acidic and thunderous
making the mountain that much higher
but it just may be the only thing
my pruny hands
understand.