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Within Reach

Catherine Marcheschi

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Within Reach

“Serene” is how I am characterized.
Beneath my body, wherein lies
My heart: calm, and ever doubled in size.

My eyes are made clear, untroubled, and bright.
Their clouds dissipated by light,
And with them I see that all is made right.

They see where the sunshine dances
Atop Normandy horizons.
Through the sands of time, she rises.

Though the raucous storm on me took its toll,
A softness seeps in and cradles my soul,
Igniting my spark; will I be made whole?

My lips lightly part; though, should they cause a breach
Between life’s wonders and the joy that I teach?
I look beyond, the ocean’s within reach.

A child laughs; footsteps approach from the house.
Small hands tug the hem of my blouse
Wanting my embrace; I wink at my spouse.

Her warm fingers trace alongside my jaw,
And I fear she will notice flaws.
Rather, in her eyes, I see only awe.

Author's Note

I captured this moment while traveling in Northern France two years ago, while standing at the shore of one of Normandy's beaches. I had returned from serving a mission only a week before, and the future was daunting and unsure. While I looked out to the horizon and listened to the waves rolling and lightly crashing against the sand, I felt stillness and peace and a spark of anticipation. Now when I look at this photo, I am reminded to listen to my heart, because I believe that what we yearn for is inseparably connected to our individual purpose.



Just as the horizon in this photo is not clearly outlined, our futures are not distinctly recognizable. But how beautiful is that, for that is when the heavens and earth appear to be seamless; and when we look to the horizon, we see that they are one. As women, we can sometimes feel like we are swimming upstream in the labor world or feel like our work (whether in the home, the workplace, or elsewhere) is unrecognized. But when we are striving for what is out on the horizon, we are touching the heavens. That power and inspiration brings a sense of awe and divinity to our experiences.

Inspiration for the poem goes to my friend, who, when asked the first word that came to mind after seeing this photo, said, “serenity.”

“Serenity”—Middle English; from Latin “serenus,” meaning clear and untroubled. Other definitions: marked by or suggestive of utter calm and unfurled repose or quietude; clear and free of storms of unpleasant change; shining bright and steady.