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The Half-Life

Cara Bullinger

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THE HALF-LIFE

Here there is no death, no birth,
Nothing but warm sand, still pools
Of silence and water.
She has stayed here with him,
For how long she does not know,
Smiling to see him laugh
At the sun-speckled fish, the bickering gulls,
And watching him write unfinished poems in the sand.

Beyond the ridge of rocks,
She hears the ocean surf
Wailing, then whispering, and imagines
The flame of sunset over the water.
She wonders what gifts of shells
The tide may leave her.

At night, when he sleeps,
She whispers to him of all her dreams
And touches his hand. He coughs,
Moves away; the cool breeze covers her body,
Fingers her hair while she listens to the sea
Sighing and chanting to the land,
Touching the shore, drawing away
And returning again like flowers
Blooming in spring and dying in fall.

She puts a shell to the man's ear.
He moans when he hears the fierce sea-song,
And she wonders if she has become like him,
Curled up like a fetus,

Afraid to be caught in the tides
And tossed to the light.

Cara Bullinger