

It Took a Ferry

It took a ferry ride through cold, dark unfamiliar waters for them to see a glimmer of me
For them to feel the deep, rich, ocean I am made of
It's like seeing a seashell in a desert canyon and not knowing the how and the why of how it came to be there
Not understanding the soft ridges or colors in contrast to the desolate landscape
Now maybe they will know what an island could have possibly meant to my young, growing heart
The rocky shore, the gusting winds, and the water that surrounds
Why now, all grown up I will drive for hours
To feel the salt on my lips and the wind whip my face and the sound
That glorious thunder of the waves meeting the shore and receding like a heart beat
Returning me to the temple of my familiar
Maybe now they can see how my vision expands outward
Past the periphery of the shore
Always curious beyond the ferry dock
Other ways of living
Other ways of being
Did they glimpse for a moment the spirit of island people?
Did they see the deep lines from the chapping of cold marine air?
Or the freckled hands of old men from endless summers emptying crab pots, like my dad had?
Did they see the grit?
Or the community that happens when people pull together, when water surrounds them?
Did they pause to consider, these people were my first teachers?
It was on an island, with a ferry riding the only vein to the outside world that gave me the courage to soar
It was that cool, damp, foggy, majestic, emerald water place
That gave me a heart with many chambers
Forged iron pathways
And room for almost everyone to fit

It was all that
That took me jungles
And Mayan villages
And warm Caribbean waters
With red clay roads
Brown hands
Classrooms full of so many faces that two shared one desk
And the smell of new life
The heaviness of death
And now in cities
And freeways
And high-rises
And concrete
But still my nautical soul
Looks for the sunrise every morning at dawn
And still looks for that orange band every evening
And seagulls glide in my mind's eye
And in the distance sometimes the slight sound of the ferry's fog horn
Maybe standing on the deck of the ferry
Holding tightly to the rail
Maybe they saw their first glimmer of me
Maybe