**Lina Boyer**

In my dream, the sun was rising.

Orange shards of light rippled over the endless ocean, lighting up the white beach houses on the coast. A man stared out at the water and the sun, the steam from his coffee swirling into the salty air. Below him, his submarine sat docked, bobbing in the water like a giant rubber marshmallow with a glass window. After the scalding coffee was all drunk up, he would wake his family so they could take a trip across the sea to the harbour on the other side.

Behind him a boy tiptoed up the paint-peeled steps, and paused at the top, surprised to see a grown man as awe-struck by the glimmering expanse of water as he was.

The boy had shaggy hair that dipped down over his eyes and covered up his ears. Ruffled pajamas hung in wrinkles around his bony limbs. The boy was not the man’s son. Or neighbor. Or nephew. He hardly knew the man. He was the forgotten stepson of a friend of a friend of a friend to the man, but he had no where else to live and I can’t remember why, but this man took him in.

The boy didn’t know whether or not to climb down again. The sky and the sun stretched across the horizon so wonderfully, but that man was a stranger he’d prefer not to talk to. In the end it was too late. Those last sips of black coffee were gone and the dawn was creeping into morning. The man saw the boy before he had the chance to run away, and told him gently to wake the others.

The others, the mother, the son, and the daughter, were nearly completely ready by the time the whole sky had faded from pink to blue. The mother stood by the dock with a picnic basket clutched in her hand, shouting after her children and the boy to hurry up, and that they were wasting the time they had planned to relax on a different shore of the same ocean.

When the man could finally untie the frail ropes from the rubber submarine and let his family drift away from shore, the sun was casting shorter shadows and the sky was a fuller blue. But when the man jumped in the U-boat, he pulled a lever and shut out the horizon. The boy and the family were pressed together around a cold metal handrail, just making out the silhouettes of each other’s faces by the dying light bulbs fixed to the rubber walls around them. The mother pressed down some buttons and the boy squoze the handrail as tightly as he could. The son and the daughter laughed at him for being so nervous. Suddenly, the submarine whirred and then began dropping downwards, meter by meter, and his taunters became silent. The boy peered out the little glass window, but all he could see was a dark blue, slowly growing darker. In their little tank the family propelled themselves down to depths of the sea, and then floated across towards the harbour on the other side. The boy began to relax his grip when a jolt knocked him into the mother. The U-boat groaned, and then was silent. The family didn’t make a sound, either. Then, a few moments later, it creaked and dropped several meters. The daughter began to whimper, and the mother shushed her. The man imagined, for a split second, the seams holding vehicle together breaking apart, and ejecting his family and the little boy into the icy water. And he imagined the endless blue ocean, and the giant creatures, and the miles it was to the surface. He pulled himself out of the trance and pushed on all the levers and pressed all the buttons, even though somewhere in the back of his mind he realised that it wouldn’t do anything. There was too much pressure all around them. The flashing lights went dim and the dying bulbs went black. Above them, the edges of the submarine were ripping. In a split second the man reached up for the dangling rope attached to the ceiling and his son grabbed his other hand. Then the ocean came flooding in, and then there were no more walls, and the metal handrail dropped away, but the air that was left in the rubber tarp that had once been the roof shot up towards the surface. The man was pulled up behind it, grasping after the fraying rope, and behind him he pulled his family, connected by a chain of hands. All around them, endless blue water flowed past them and became slowly lighter. Somewhere far above the man could see the shifting light from the surface, but three people below him, the boy could only feel the dark salt water bubble up around his body. And to the side of all of them the sea stretched on, seemingly forever, with no hint of the harbour on the other side.

And that’s when I woke up. I will never know if they broke the surface, or if they sank and drowned.