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*Cover and book designed by Haliley Furilla  
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## PRAISE FOR DRIFT

"An instant bestseller, Furilla's weaves language into a beautiful tapestry of heartache, loss, and memory as she traverses through a post-pandemic landscape." -Imaginary New York Times Review

"I'm not at all sure what poetry is, but I'm here writing this review because I will get paid for it. This poem was very confusing and depressing, but in a very cool and unique way. 10/10 even though I don't know what I am doing here. Good job, Hailey." -Anonymous Confused Reader

"Furilla displays a masterful talent for capturing the isolation of the pandemic and the susquent alienation that one feels after returning to a broken world. Absolutely stunning." -Maybe the Chicago Tribune

"I can't believe they brought me back to do another review for this book.

What can I say that I didn't say in the first review...

Furilla uses a variety of literary techniques in order to create a nuanced and well written poem. Yeah, that sounds right. And professional. Peace out again." -Anonymous Confused Reader (returning)

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Hailey Furilla

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My poem "Drift" explores and seeks to conceptualize the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of young adults. It follows the main protagonist's life during and after her year long quarantine as she navigates the relationships of those around her while ignoring the connection she is slowly losing with herself. Throughout the poem, the main character has to confront loneliness, depersonalization, and the inevitable change that comes with her self-destructive behavior. My intent with this poem is to provide a story that helps others with similar mental health struggles, whether it teaches them how to be present, or just validates their own experience. For those who cannot relate, I hope it gives them insight into the struggles of anxiety and depression.

# DRIFT

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Written and Edited by:

Hailey Furilla

For those in the before, the after, and, most importantly the now: you've made shipwreck all more bearable.

“I change the landscape as I pass  
Meandering from sand to glass  
I suction there for one whole day  
Until the feeling goes away—

Relax the world will spin beside itself and suck you in  
With threats and hopes beyond compare...”

“I've lost my mind  
I've lost my way  
I'm bound to lose  
You wonder where I am...”

—Phish “Frankie Says

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## Editor's Note

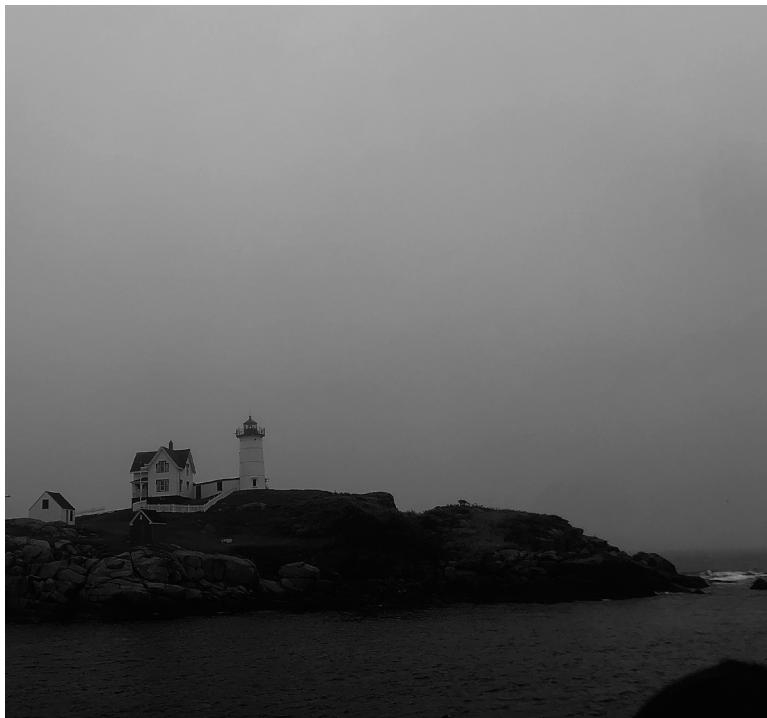
When I first wrote “Drift,” it was a singular poem. I had no intentions to expand it at the time, nor did I think of developing into a long poem that would span nearly thirty pages.

However, after writing “Drift,” I couldn’t quite leave it alone. It stayed in editing limbo for a few months before finally reaching a final draft and new intentions to start a series around its central themes. Then I was introduced to long-form poetry. It felt like the missing piece I had been looking for, and over the course of four months the poem I had originally intended to write came into being.

Though, writing on a Google document limited my creative ability. I had a variety of format changes and experimented with white space throughout each new section of my poem. Despite using an inordinate amount of tabs and spaces and different alignment, I finished the poem unsatisfied.

With this final iteration of “Drift,” I was able to realize the abstract nature of the poem through new tools oriented toward editing and reformatting text. Editing “Drift” on my own allowed me to bring my image and original intentions for the poem to life. I hope readers enjoy the result.

## The Lighthouse



It starts with the lighthouse:  
cold and cloying. Duty and  
desolation. My oath crusting  
the brick as the salt does  
the walls, base to lantern. Ever  
watching, waiting, grating  
on itself. Spiteful. Yet—  
day by day—I spill my  
liquid light into the ocean,  
desperate.

Inside the clock ticks  
morse code to the trees  
tapping on the window and  
water washes down  
my back, leaving  
an armor piece of  
icicles in their wake.  
It's time to  
turn off the light,  
but let me steal  
another second  
they're  
short these days.

Every day I miss those damn sailors  
more, hate them more, loath—  
ignore me. Ghosts linger,  
longing, in my lamp and  
lumber under stairs. Maybe  
it's me. (I don't quite recognize  
myself anymore. Mirrors  
serve other uses to me now).

The job was a  
two week gig.  
Then two months.  
Then "Just a little bit more."  
(Just a little bit more).  
And I am nothing but  
diligent  
to a fatal fault.

So I labor until  
light might as well  
be my language,  
lacerating my tongue  
as I talk away another's  
loneliness.  
(Just a little bit more).

And, I know,  
it's the same wind  
on the galley as on  
the ground, but—  
lately—I want to feel  
the wind rushing  
past my face  
and the dirt  
folding my body—  
some kid's  
abandoned origami—  
for flinging myself  
over the safety rail.

The mums are covered  
in snow, yet I still have to  
endure the boil of your words.  
It's dried the whole goddamn turkey.  
But I'll still smile through the  
stick filling my mouth. And,  
as I pick the bones clean,  
I have to dig the physics out my teeth:  
viscosity and kinematics and calculus  
crammed up to the gums. God,  
why couldn't I leave this behind.

"Appreciate—"  
What? February has been  
stuffed so far down my throat  
snow drops from my ears and  
circulates in my consciousness  
until there's new precipitation—  
Apologies, my snowglobe mentality  
muddles my emotions and  
I should be grateful of this

opportunity (Just a little bit more).  
Yet, I itch to dive into the lamp.

We wear our hair  
ridiculously long. Every  
strand slick from  
neglect. I can't afford  
to let my hand stop  
lingering on form and  
knife. Eyes tracking slip stains.  
Slicing, scraping,  
seeing how my fingers  
swivel. Reducing.  
Maybe you broke me down  
just like you do  
every time, or maybe  
you were really  
right.  
I don't know  
with the rainbows and  
snow. Showers. Buds  
peeking, frost  
creeping.  
I can't be sure.

We create a perfect mirror  
of then, standing on stones  
once something more. I  
don't know how I missed it.  
I was far too occupied with the  
downtrodden wind caressing my  
mouth that I didn't taste the memory  
of that day, an abandoned life ago.

I know this is the end,  
but I mourned that back  
in March. When a month rested  
on the cusp of two eras. And here  
we are tripping from  
grad gowns to diplomas to  
a night back at middle school  
and when dawn breaks I'm

still awake and the rain is so  
soft that it feels like the real end—  
not the shot or the bookstore or  
that room on Main Street—the real  
End. And it's perfect.

I lie on the porch  
(The Gallery),  
think of the end  
(Contract voided),  
awake to watch ships  
in the harbor then  
through the canvas,  
dipping my hands  
among acrylic waves:  
crashing,  
cold.

Right.

I can feel  
the ghost  
of the water  
Resurrecting.

## The Ship



It starts with the ship,  
teetering over the breach  
of the next wave. Abandon  
damned straight to hell.  
I can't be sure there was  
a Before. Crescent cuts,  
stubbed fingers:

gone.

On the beach screaming  
over the edge of darkness,  
polaroid memory preventing  
stars. Inhale the smoke,  
exhale the burning and—  
there, now you can breathe.

You bolster me when we're left  
up to our own devices alone—  
alone together, that's how it's been.  
And I drive windows cracked, music  
static —so I hear your shout at the  
moment of impact—

returning with  
sweet drinks shaken with laughter.  
We drift closer as the days begin to  
tug at our tank tops, and that's what  
I'm afraid of. That pull away from  
your laughter and tentative hugs.

Rocks ripping up my soles,  
water weighing, and I'm  
still going. Every crash—  
car jerking back your sister  
to your right your sister  
to your right your sister—  
only leaves you jolting  
into the next.

Ready?

Wheel in hand I'm turning and  
midsummer incandescence—  
heavy piano rocking the stars—  
too tight t-shirt cold prickling paralysis—

Where is this? When is this  
now? It's just the spontaneity  
of the sea. Not all journeys are meant  
to be smooth everything's—

(I don't know anything anymore).

My love mingles with fear and my shower  
is crossed with tears and I think  
this is going well sweating though  
stained jeans bouncing about unsure  
of this wanted feeling and I still  
find myself having to shove  
my way in, but I feel refreshed  
(free) even with the stale smell of  
this irremovable mask and I  
smile hard enough so that you can  
feel it as we connect bathed  
in sun set and rise, foggy from

new rooms. (I don't remember  
summer clothes).

Autumn splitter, Hailey as  
every version: taking,  
greedy. She wants, craves,  
tastes your turkish delight  
spits her vomit into the cup  
sucks on the glass of the bowl.  
Hands shaking "Steady." "Good girl."

Leather jacket pulling. She's  
a different girl—"Kiss her  
Hailey! Kiss her!"  
Head turn—  
you squeeze her waist. All eyes  
away. She doesn't like how all this  
feels.

Tumbling. Flipping. The wood  
sopping wet beneath my feet.  
Where'd I put the wheel?  
Last year?! No that can't be...  
First mate, to the helm! You!  
Starboard! I'm not about to  
lose the ship—

Everything fits together —a near  
perfect puzzle—as we clash  
as magnets, repelling  
and joining. Sporadic. Intense.  
So full that I feel my heart  
may burst. Even in this cold  
your love cooks me from inside  
out and books fill my days  
while I stretch and spin my nights  
just to curl up on that  
rough couch  
where you no longer tuck—

I cough up flower petals.  
No air left. Sobbing. Golden.  
Leaning—"I can change  
I swear"—Cobblestone then  
your voice. Cobblestone.  
A hiccup. A choke. A cough.  
Oh, there's the wheel let me  
give it a good  
Spin.

Soaked to the spine in sweat  
(I couldn't get enough of the  
heat now I can't stand these waves)  
My hand is ever inching toward  
yours that I don't even notice him  
walking out the door. Isolation  
has come for me at last to  
claim that contract I left.

This isn't right maybe I'll spin  
again—

There is an ease to which we entangle. Distance is finite when you are forged in electric fire. Years roll over my tongue, sit behind my teeth, and all evaporate when I talk to you. It's freezing, but I've never felt warmer in that goddamn room. Someone must have finally fixed the heater right in time for my own migration.

Warm and clean, I can smell the detergent on me—dripping—as we talk late. You and me and you deep sleep and waking, bringing my polished hands fumbling into yours.

Soft and serrated sunset so bittersweet as back pains form the seat of this short avenue ride. No one neglected I'm a bit frantic.

God, I can't go back to the Lighthouse I can't I just—

Coal soles I skitter across the patio to crimped grass. The air inside is cold but heavy. I'm holding everything in my head (split it open like a melon I'm sure you'll find the insults packed in, seedy)

I waste my days wasted come back in uniform hoping this minor decision blows over.

S p i n...

Holding hands in the rain and on late night buses back. Home. Daffodils crowd my senses as you draw me into yourself—Spring Herself—bringing in new days, new beginnings in small rooms that have never felt quite as big.

Summer escapades to Burlington consuming food and friends: Bibimbap, Korean Corndogs, your music bouncing my car over speed bumps cradling our catchup conversations, chocolate cake crumbling on my tongue as fingers peruse pictures to show you. Green tea was yesterday and sugar cookies were rainy today hiding amongst the selves with your impatience shining until we're at Red Robin's eating bottomless fries to break wallowing sighs and I ask for another glass of milk (you're obliging then, I don't know what changed between swapping stories and next semester). Round is how it feels on

my tongue and it tastes  
as white as the  
countertops: a place I'll  
never return to—

There's so many  
memories piled on the  
wheel I worry—

Granite shatters  
fractals from the  
fracture slipping  
between sinew and skin  
bowls and white cupboards  
fold and suck me in while  
laughter languishes in the  
air while I am sucked—

My hands mime a wheel  
due to absent minded  
compensation.  
The boat has hunched in on  
itself for lack of crew and  
one sail is now where there were  
three—how can this be?  
Waves loom as monuments  
to ephemerality.  
I stagger to the rudder  
but what I grasp is—

A box of Apples to Apples,  
on the drunk cusp of sleep,  
a girl's night splayed out  
around me. This floor would be

A confidant to my declarations  
of love spoken in seven tongues.  
Here I can cradle your gaze in my  
eyes while I can carve off a pretty  
piece of my mind for you to eat.

Apples to Apples flops and  
slouches in my hand until  
I'm holding a pool noodle to  
beat you with.

My mouth turns  
salty with cheery tears as we  
dance on a newly made bed of  
musty sheets, singing to each other  
and dozing off to shadow puppet  
sleep. Reality running on the heat of our  
night, our hot breath mellowing  
into cool morning air to breathe.

Condensation prickles in my  
right hand. My water bottle,  
bare, replacing the rudder yet  
reminiscent of what it might  
be (think harder, Hailey, get  
yourself back on that boat)

“You can only blame yourself  
for your friends not inviting you.”

I look over sweaty see her from  
six years prior though only  
box dye has changed her.

“You don't make an effort to see  
them.”

I'm still holding the water bottle  
but I watch the dashboard tear  
itself up and the floor tidy before  
becoming stained again and  
glasses snap around her head as  
she tilts a confused look at me and  
her hair is dark as a thunderstorm.

“Have you even tried reaching out?  
You're just giving up again.”

The rattle skips off and on in the  
backseat as I tumble through thought:  
texts without replies crying on tiled  
floors as I see how far your deceit  
bleeds into every communication  
I made these past few months, but

it's still my fault.

The car jumps,      buckles,      I whirl,  
 shuffle away seeing you're  
 not in the seat and we're not  
 under fiery trees but a whole  
 galaxy. The rumble in the  
 backseat gets louder as wheels  
 drop      into infinity and I become  
 a fireball along with the hunk of  
 metal I'm trapped in. I'm feeling  
 uncharacteristically  
 claustrophobic.

Spin. Spin. Spin.

Except now it's me  
 who's spinning the  
 height of my hair  
 careening above me.  
 And the hands on my  
 waist squeeze tighter  
 than my whale corpse  
 corset as he asks me  
 to      "Breathe out"  
 I can't draw enough air  
 "Keep breathing out"  
 It's what these macaroni  
 men order as they  
 pass me      round      and round  
 until my head bashes on  
 a chess board floor and stars—

Explode around me as I  
 crackle,      frigid,      miss orbit  
 soaring so far that I      further  
 my contradiction,      wondering  
 not if the fire will win or the  
 ice, but when.

When.

My dust tail blurs until it's  
 the powder on my wig until  
 it's the sand on the wind  
 migrating under the cool  
 breath      of the moon. The  
 deep blue sky welcome  
 to creatures and condensation  
 but soon day will      creep and  
 I will stay with scant sweat  
 abandoned by animals  
 above when they are under.  
 Just stay with me,      please.      Stay.

I clatter onto the deck  
 a peg      loosened from the  
 rudder, utterly destroyed.  
 My true body      keeled  
 over what's left of the stern.  
 Detached      it's hard to watch  
 each sob echo through  
 my own body;  
 I don't recognize it  
 and so I slip into accidental  
 empathy,      but then lightning  
 splits down the helm and  
 I ricochet sparkling and  
 floating and—

I am above our fire.  
 crystalline and colorful  
 as we toss cheap color—  
 changing powder reducing us  
 to a cacophony of      oh's      and      ah's.  
 I drift among the smoke rings  
 my father makes      and,      if only  
 sparks could sink. To be back  
 on that stick.

To be back.

To sink.

I've done it this time,  
strayed too far away to  
days wholly unattainable.  
The boards crumble and  
pluralized hands bumble  
(I don't think my body  
remembers itself anymore).

Water envelops me and  
cold seeps through my pores  
so icy quick I bite the bends  
rush to the surface and—  
The storm is gone,  
the yoke of the sun fries on  
the sky where a thousand people  
bob with me. They swim with  
sun-kissed skin, hands gentle  
as sunbeams as they push me  
under the orange oscillation of  
the ocean, until the martian sky  
fades and the sunset orders to:  
“Exhale all air.”

I batter and blubber  
against the lather of foam,  
then on that souring salt  
flooding through nose and mouth,  
morphing to fire as I gag on:  
bubbles endless bubbles.

Tears only tantalize  
the sea, and they  
seep easy into the frothy  
freeze, and my fiery  
eyes can only see: bubbles  
endless bubbles. A carbonated  
catastrophe for sodium deficient  
freaks, a misremembered ramen  
recipe that I should've remembered.

I should've remembered.

It was for you.

“Drift.”

I break the surface and surge  
forward all sloppy strokes.  
My hands pushing and  
pulling  
away, willing the change: a  
seagull, a squid, a life vest, a  
float, a boat, a something.  
Something, something, something.  
Cause the people pinch with fingers  
like crab claws and they pull like  
an undertow so far from the shore  
and I can see their siren teeth  
gleam. Submarine phantoms of the deep.

“Drift.”

Sixteen on the coast of the Cape  
and my shorts ride up my ass  
from too much ice cream  
and I watch every wave pound  
the shore even though the storm  
has passed. And

that's what the voice sounds like.

“Drift.”

It's that feeling when winter  
comes and there are so many  
stars and so little room for  
breath and the moon weighs  
upon your chest pleasantly  
and in that moment there would  
be nothing better than eternity  
holding its gaze in your eyes,  
your chest,  
your mouth.

“Drift.”

It's my Nana's tea just strong  
 enough to really taste but just  
 sweet enough to bring me back  
 every sip, but she won't negotiate  
 on the milk —it's "paper-bag"—  
 and when you're small its  
 okay for tea to be sweet.

When you're four you don't think  
 about how much they've compromised

For you.

I'm halfway to the grave, three feet  
 deep in the water the swish of fish  
 tails on my face as I come to:  
 lungs flat, body bloating.  
 I claw my way to the surface  
 to find an island not too far

(my eyes are all blue) and I  
 can only hope that it possesses  
 one of the fantastical memories  
 that propels me where friends  
 aren't ghosts, and family  
 fits easy, and I am so drunk  
 on happiness I don't hate myself  
 all the way. So I swim.

I have never known stagnance.

I will never know stagnance.

I will swim. I won't let myself—

"Drift."

God, leave me alone don't you see me  
 pulling at the seams indistinguishable from  
 dream as I navigate this overgrown stream  
 I know I'm too weak and my arms bend weird  
 and I worry for my legs letting blood  
 just let me get to the island and live  
 another golden time and forget and forget and  
 forget that it's all gone while I'm  
 Here and let me swim before you let me  
 Drift and put me down at the sunset before you make me  
 Drift and forth the love of God—

"Hailey, that's enough."

## The Ocean



Hailey.  
Stop.

I can still grip the wheel in spite of sirens and sharks and scaled critters chewing on my legs until they're nothing but seafoam their feast is in vain as I batter them to no more than bits don't come close I am in control and I will be totally wholly and completely fine if you just let me spin the wheel another time or maybe if you allowed me to do it thrice or five more times for it will work.

Your tongue bleeds rubies and  
your hands bracket stars and  
you remember a million sunsets, but,  
oh, Hailey, no one can live like this—

You don't understand;  
if I don't sail I will sink  
if I don't swim I will drown  
and when I finally stop I will—

Drift, dear girl.  
You will drift  
and you will bob  
and float and,  
maybe, you will  
sink, but  
I promise you,  
the tides will  
cradle you if  
you only let—

When have the tides ever protected me?  
I've been its plaything for what feels like centuries  
and how happy I will be to sweep my hand across this board  
of a world as I finally take Time and peel off the dainty swirl of its shell  
until its juicy skin is just as raw as my own and oh how I'll make it pay for every  
moment it's pilfered feigning naivete and everyone it beguiled behind my back  
being momentarily enraptured. I'll shove my love down their throats myself.

Oh darling, I know  
your grip has been  
shaped for swords and  
your tongue violent  
words, but I see how  
gently you once let  
your thumb trace  
times's whorls as  
you explored all its  
grooves...

Hailey.  
What are you doing?

If you do not drift,  
you will drown.  
I am telling you now:  
the world will not be  
stagnant if you surrender,  
nor will you be bashed  
upon the coral, rotting,  
nor will you forget.

Do you want to forget?  
Your fingers are banded  
with this multitude of  
memories, so the skin is  
stretched thin as violet  
petals. And, oh, how it  
resembles that color too.

I am swimming.  
It is all that I know  
aside from sailing and  
I have done my time  
helpless so I will be subject  
to no tides or time or world ever  
again.

...

...

I have been living  
as if the world has been  
ending for three years now.  
And I never learned how to live  
without loving too much, holding  
too hard and I don't really know how  
to stop myself. Maybe it would be better  
to forget, even though it terrifies me, it hurts  
more to go through these near constant changes.  
The losing and the winning and the losing all over.  
One coming right after the other right as I settle myself.  
And every person I love, I lose, and all these moments slip so  
easily. How do I deal with the Drift? How am I supposed to let it all go?

That's just life. The  
tides rise and fall and the  
moon pushes and pulls. And  
forgetting would make change all the  
more worse. An unbruised body is weak and  
waves unforgiving. I wish there was a way for you  
to keep all those pretty jewels you carry, but advice is  
the only thing I can offer to you: let your words mingle with  
the surf and if they echo back in the crash maybe it was meant to be,  
but sometimes you'll never hear those words again. It will hurt. But it eases.

I have to ask: is it  
me? I keep racking my  
brain as to why it's so—

It is  
you, holding  
onto the past you  
are inert to the future.  
But it isn't all too bad to  
look, you just need to Drift.

I try  
to Drift—

No, you linger on  
what you please and sap  
your soul of now with then  
and you skip, and you can't skip what  
you don't like, but neither should you tether  
yourself in place. It is why you must learn to Drift.

Is Drift not a lost  
friend? Is it not a bottle  
at sea its author anonymity and  
its destination nowhere from equator  
to prime meridian? Is it not the snow that  
covers a toy that will never be seen? Is it not the  
growing space between you and me as we speak?

It's tasting ice cream  
and remembering all twenty  
summers of your existence tasting  
it and eating more just to affirm that you  
will eat it for twenty more, thinking about  
all the ways you have had it and then feeling it  
drip down your hand and going back for a lick and  
eat it, truly eating it, for your twentieth time, thinking about  
your twentieth time. Only thinking about your twentieth time.

I am just  
so worried I'll forget  
because I have already erased  
so much. Everything during my  
time at the Lighthouse and now some  
of what came before. I worry when I took my  
eraser the strokes were far too broad and long. Why  
not take every moment to remember every moment as it  
slips away and why not stick fast to every memory even as it becomes  
twilight, even as it passes into a realm where I can't go. Why not try to hold on?

Your forgetting was  
manufactured and now you treat  
your memories the same way. For trying  
to preserve you're losing what it once was.  
Fossilization eventually destroys what had been there  
until there it is nothing of what it once was. I come across these  
little gifts of nature often, but not even a ghost could cling to those rocks.

So then, what do I  
do to Drift and remember?

You look then you Drift,  
simple as that. Follow the pull and  
the resulting push back to where you were  
and, most importantly, you live, Hailey, cause  
you're not living now. There may be a steady permanence  
in the past, but it can be a glue trap for a small pirate like you.

Show  
me, show me how  
to Drift as others do.

Will you promise to  
let go of your loot and surrender  
to tide as it guides you through memory? To follow the whispers to the trenches  
of the deep and return to seafoam shores? Do you  
promise to caress coral and rock and wave? Though, mostly, do you promise me without any doubt that you will not resist?

I  
promise not to  
shift to stay in form and  
Drift. And stay in your domain in  
perpetual change, if only you let me.

It's up  
to you, if you  
Drift. I cannot stop  
where you go but I promise  
you the pain will never be greater  
than anchorage. I promise you that...

# The Debris



How eager the ship

Diverges from the lighthouse

Both end in debris

Both end in debris

After crashing on the rocks

Time buckling form

Time buckling form

The tides cradled me instead

Babe of the ocean

Babe of the ocean

Salt sustains my lungs below

I walk by floating

I walk by floating

To and fro and fro and to

No destination

No destination

I greet ship and nautilus

Listen to whale song

Listen to whale song

To driftwood creak and shrimp snore

Listen don't remain

Listen don't remain

It's the beggars game you'll see

His ship is breaking

His ship is breaking

A pirate of memory

It's not greed but love

It's not greed but love

But love shouldn't weigh a thing

Yet the ship creaks so

How the ship creaks, so

Love the sea not your treasure

For it will drown you

It will drown you sir

I'm no siren of the sea

I know memory

I know memory

It can be a poison love

Drift with me instead

Drift with me instead

You may still see your treasure

May touch your treasure

Touch your treasure but

Leave it where it has sunken

Don't let it break you

Don't let it break you

Don't fight friendly tides my friend

Be debris with me

Be debris with me

See wonders weightless beneath

Don't become stagnant

Don't become stagnant

Such things are not meant for the sea

Sailor live with me

Sailor live with me

Don't become stagnant

Be debris with me

Don't let it break you

Touch your treasure but

Drift with me instead

I know memory

It will drown you sir

How the ship creaks so

It's not greed but love

Your ship is breaking

Listen don't remain

Listen to whale song

No destination

Now walk by floating

Babe of the ocean

Time buckling form

End in debris.

Now listen to me

Drift with me and see just how

Happy you can be.

## Afterword

In the midst of the pandemic, I often dreamed of a ship. It had big, gaudy sails that caught the fluff of clouds that drifted over my backyard. I dreamed alongside my father, asking what he'd think of getting a ship, which would spur on conversations of canoes and skiffs and pontoon boats. We could do it. All four of us could pack into one of those tiny boats. Together, alone, amid the crash of the waves.

However, the boat never came. Instead, I left the pandemic with a new medication and an above ground pool. I was anxious to move on with my life after missing a year. I would push forward, a determined captain seeking to chart a new course, drunk on the stars.

Three years following the start of the pandemic and two years following the end of my strict quarantine, I am still dealing with the lasting effects the pandemic had on my psyche. In a world so content to push forward, I feel we are quick to claim it is all behind us; all those loose ends have been tied up. But the sad truth is that the pandemic continues to linger in storefront windows and at the edges of texts and always at the back of my—and I'm sure others'—mind.

With this poem, I sought to show this nonlinear departure from the worst of the pandemic to the tumult of the world after. In a world seeking to move on, I have drifted back to explore what we gained and lost from these last few years, and yes, how to properly move forward.

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