

## Dry Alter

I am a fish dying on an altar. Worship my gills as they draw for breath and hold no yield. Here I lie, breathing and wheezing and gasping for air, and here you are still calling me beautiful. How cruel of you to show me such affections when you have the hands to help.

But you won't.

You are the worshiper who loves the tragedy. I am the fish you caught and left on the hook for bait. I am the victim of your selfishness and desire. Find me morning come and see I am still here, and the better has not come, though my blood stains the water as it runs cold. Use me as a vessel to try for a feeling, but be left with nothing aside from disappointment. Keep fishing and find that I am the only one to come back. I am the sticky blood on your hands, the warmth enveloping them as you appreciate the sin.

Hold me in your arms and eat my flesh as my salty sea of tears falls from my eyes and rolls down your lips. Use me to closer yourself to that of which you love. I know I, the fish, will never be enough.

I am the fish you eat and the one who suffocates on your altar to your god. Watch as the other fish eye me with envy, not knowing the hate that is spilling from my neck.

I yield nothing for you but a lesson you are soon to forget. Soon, my ruby blood will stain the altar once again and fade to dirt, and the cycle will repeat. We are stuck in a tidepool where you are the predator and I the prey, you need me to be satiated, and I have to be without you to survive.

Read my gills as a prophet and weep at your sin as you commit again, your sin will never leave your side, and my dead eyes will continue to haunt you. Weep as you run the river dry of fish, as you take more and more day by day. Soon, the traps will yield empty.

Bite my head and it will serve you nothing but my body, my flesh, will fill your stomach and quench your desire, but not for long because soon you will come back for more. You can never have enough of the ceremonies over my corpse, gutted and a husk of the fish I once was. May all the altars' fish evade the traps you place and escape the salty sea. The sea running down your chin. The sea running down my face.

I am the fish dying on the altar, and you hold the athame that shall be my end.