

Lighthouse

In squints, she wipes her failing eyes, eyes which soften over a tower soldiering bands of red and white. In her hour of finality, she digs her heels into prayers for salvation. If there was someone up there, they could save her. Pruning fingers and a face chalky like a skeleton in a mural, she heaves, clung to the solemn figure. Her gasps diminish in urgency, taking on the feeble shallowness of a pauper dying with an outstretched hand. His docile eyes sigh upon her helplessness. He has seen this show before. After enough bodies dropped into the blue, he lost the pleasure in throwing them a bone. In early days of hope, he simply tutted and swung his light to them, isolating the breathing corpses for some chance of rescue. If the watchers weren't so complacent about their shifts, fewer immature bones would slug along the sea floor. They would hear the happy munching of the aquatic metropolis, brought together by this buffet of limbs. On days like today, the cries of dinner reach the sky. Seagulls circle and sing in harmony as the pillowing duvet coos of an excellent catch. They roar with every metre swallowed by its icy mouth.

Consciousness absconds her body with an evolutionary regression, the lighthouse whimpers with sudden empathy. Metres below her swaying toes, as the water grows cooler and swallows the light of day, fins cut blue cord and argue over first servings. Meeting peace, her skin dips deeper into a treasure trove of wandering darkness; blind in a hunting ground.

On the bench neighbouring the window, the ocean waves it down for dinner. Restless in the thin draft from years of unfulfilled maintenance, pages heave back and forth, exhausted. His thumb performs morse code in attempt to steady the narrative as his index finger approaches a salivating mouth. Expecting a page turn, his tongue teeters on the outskirts of his lips. The book shrieks as the pages tug on its rind. Rigid in age and attitude, it resembles the window's crack, inflicted by a dopey pigeon drugged up on morning drowsiness. The remnants of another shift drawing to a close drips water onto the printed words. The ink, swelling like hunger in a small belly, sullies the story's end. With impetuous spirit, it now races her body to sink. He rubs his forehead, sighing in light of this wet mess, his face saturated with the aloofness of a dreamer. Creaking periodically, his chair rocks. Boots clench clumps of mud and beat a melody. Like a trained pet, they meet the tune he whistles.

The table is now set, and the predatory party are saying grace. As the pungent breeze of an imminent meal wafts up his striped walls, her hand waves a salutary gesture. Such oblivion. The lighthouse booms with a raging migraine. As the man picks up tune, smiling ever so slightly, his stomach stirs with visions of a late lunch.