

Lighthouse

The tower soldiers red and white, standing dormant on a rocky cliff. His yellow beam screams of rage and pierces her failing eyes. In squints, she wipes pruned fingers across taut pale skin, her face chalky like a skeleton in the closet. In her hour of terminus, she digs her heels into prayers for salvation. If there was someone up there, they could save her. Her gasps diminish in urgency, taking on the feeble shallowness of a pauper dying with an outstretched hand. His docile eyes sigh upon her helpless frame. 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 boney twigs 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 of blue sea coos of an excellent catch. They roar with every metre swallowed by its icy mouth.

Consciousness absconds her body with an evolutionary recession; the lighthouse whimpers with empathy, desperate to extend a hand to the bird with an injured wing. 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, the water's iridescence alight with eager gleaming teeth. Meeting peace, her skin dips deeper into a treasure trove of wandering darkness and vulnerability; 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; the index finger approaches his salivating mouth. His tongue teeters on the outskirts of his lips, expecting a sudden plot twist. The book shrieks as the pages tug on its rind, rigid in age and attitude like the window's crack. Inflicted by a dopey pigeon drugged up on morning drowsiness, the remnants of another shift drawing to a close drip water onto the printed words. The ink, swelling like hunger in a small belly, now races her to sink. Surrounded by a fluid landscape, he rolls his shoulders back in face of this wet mess, his face saturated with the aloofness of a dreamer. Creaking periodically, his chair rocks, dizzying the frame of the lighthouse. Boots clench clumps of mud and beat a melody. Like a trained pet, they meet the tune he whistles.

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