

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 is 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.” -Anonymou Confused Reader (returning)



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Hailey Furilla  
*Drift*

*Drift*



Hailey Furilla

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

Written and Edited by:  
Hailey Furilla

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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  
 S p i n .

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.

Spin...

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 con-  
versations, chocolate  
cake crumbling on my  
tongue as fingers per-  
use 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 sparking 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 for 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?

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.

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 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 is 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 try-  
 ing 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 mem-  
 ory? 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, most-  
 ly, 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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