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INTRODUCTION

"If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water."

Loren Eiseley, The Immense Journey

On February 2, 2017, a group of Aquarium of the Pacific members gathered for the Adult Member Pastries and Poetry event.

UCLA Writing Programs professor Dr. Tara Prescott facilitated the event, introducing the writers to various poetry exercises, including black-out poems, cut-out poems, found poems, and magnetic poetry.

Fueled with coffee and pastries, members set out into the Tropical Pacific and Northern Pacific galleries to observe the marine animals closely, listen to the ideas that came from the swirling waters, and write poems inspired by the exhibits.

This collection offers a sampling of some of the poems written that night. We hope you enjoy them!
WAVES
Vicky J.

Clinging to the rock the green algae plead to let go,
Let me move with the waves.
Be free.
Torture and movements is all that I know.
Moving with the sounds of the waves makes me ill.
Yet I hang on, I exist in this turbulent life.
I run and hide try to escape, yet I am doomed to the relentless, neverending waves of life.
Help! Why me?
A PEACEFUL EXISTENCE
Vicky J.

Peace and serenity abound my existence.
A Zen-like quality of pure bliss. Still though I be,
I close my tentacles on unsuspecting prey for my benefit.
I cling to the rocks.
I cling to the window.
My existence is totally at peace.
A green algae stands tall and proud.
Guarding my domain, this is what I crave.
A peaceful existence.
Amen.
THE SWEET PASTRY
Vicky J.

The sweet pastry dances off the roof of my mouth as I watch the graceful movements of the Batfish. The “Tom and Jerry” hijinks of the smaller cousins and the stony face Parkinson look of the Grouper. Moving as a group but in a single unit, they ease their way to nowhere. The Bats gliding through the crowd. Heavy traffic moves in a consistent circle. Late for nothing, on time for not.

A small figure drops suddenly from the fluid abyss above. Descending into the darkness oblivion corralled for eternity in what they call home. I hear music from the side. A “honu” (turtle) breaks the monotony by swimming upwards. Distracted by a shark cutting his way thru the crowd, an opening appears and the shark is gone. The music continues. The grouper does not change his menacing face. One more sweet pastry to end my night.
CRUSH ON CRUSTACEANS
David Conrad

I have a crush on crustaceans
Now cephalopods are fine
But despite their bad reputation
Crabs are my kind of brine

Their name’s synonymous with grouchy
They do seem easily piqued
A claw on your toe can be ouchy
They are pushy and not at all meek

Their sideways gait is preposterous
Whether to left or to right
Don’t know if they’re ambi-walksterous
Just that they like to fight
NEIGHBORS
Edgard Ado

Silently we hover
   as our neighbors float
   in turbulent space

Lapping o’er and o’er
   to and fro
In that same cool void
   that is our home.
CRASH TANK
David Chodosh

Mechanized waves bounce and crash,
Spray a salty mist into the darkened air.

The violent slapping—does it portend
a foreboding storm or turbulence by design?
So chaotic does the surface scream.

Yet, less than a fathom below on the creamy sea floor
Anemone have found a secure quiet home.
Pushed and pulled somehow they stay bonded peacefully.
To the chiseled rock, anchored, immovable, oblivious,
as the stormy rapids just above rages on and on.
IN THE TIDE POOL
Melanie Lewis

tiny iron stripe
storm dance
against wicked spray
chains and pulleys
tavel the minutes
upright in the deep
bare artificial critters
the current
the past
a torpedoed discovery
Some days like them I want to wiggle sideways through life to have trees, soft branches, kind flowers itching my worries away! Or maybe just stay still for hours! Their worry, if they have one, is to be eaten away! Mine are many and I still live at the end of them all! Small, medium, or large, they all live peacefully together, why can’t we humans do the same?
BLACKOUT POETRY
Susan Schmitt

logic
intrigued inspired existence
At
Rainbow

creator
drove the creatures
to
travel by
seahorse

Neptune used Bronze
belt to
Reflection

Dragons in
The ocean
LOOKING UP
William Jacob Cavanaugh

I’m looking from beneath at the trembling place
Where the atmosphere presses itself upon
The shoulders of the ocean, and of all the creatures,
I alone am looking up.

But why should I or any other be so foolish—
To dawdle and waste my gaze?
I can’t discern meaning from
The scattering colors that ripple from Heaven.

The grouper crosses ambivalently,
And his large eyes roll around suggesting he knows his place.
As he stops by a woman in the glass,
I wonder if he knows his purpose.