



## Kent Leatham

KENT LEATHAM, a Carmel Valley native and Pacific Grove High School graduate, is currently completing a BA in creative writing at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. For the last two years he has edited *Saxifrage*, PLU's literary arts journal. Kent has been previously published in *Saxifrage*, *PLU Scene*, on Sam Hamill's *Poets Against the War* website, and in Seattle's *Poetry on Buses*.

## JONAH

i.

I have left the body of the whale  
and it was beautiful. The slime

still hangs from my tongue  
and teeth. My eyes are  
coal-dark, glass-dark.

I sing of the sea  
and the fathomless gut.

I sing of the joy  
of punishment  
by whale.

ii.

To the whale  
love is not a letting go.

To the whale  
love is a plunging down until  
all that is not song falls  
away by itself.

iii.

From the whale my soul  
has learned to sing.

From the whale my soul  
has learned that life is long and has  
a twenty-foot tongue.

iv.

And yet—

v.

There are notes,  
notes like lice, clinging, like  
fingers to the side of a ship,  
like hard-shelled prayers and slime.

There are notes that never  
fall away.

vi.

Those that listen  
ask about my  
three-day god

my three long nights in  
the bowels of the void.

They ask about my sacrifice.

vii.

I say  
There was an older god  
in the belly of the whale

who burned  
and did not believe in death  
or men.

## POET LIKE A GOAT

When he was sick, his friends brought him flowers.  
He ate them.

When he was well, they brought him poems.  
He ate them, too.

He ate the food put down for the dog, and, when the dog  
lay sleeping,  
tried for the golden broom of tail.

He ate the slippers his wife arranged by the bed;  
he ate, petal by petal, his wife each morning.

He ate the poppy-seed words out of songs  
and the cellophane wings off of prayers,

and, when he died, he ate the first angelic earthworm  
that tickled the digestion of his sleep.

“Poet Like a Goat” first appeared in *Saxifrage*.



## Peggy Mastrude

I am seventy-five.  
My mother is the sea,  
My father, the earth.

I have lived by these pacific shores  
half a lifetime,  
gathering deep  
a reservoir of life  
experience  
and memories.

And now am I witness to  
the dramatic spiraling downward  
of my companion's  
mind and body,  
though the essential self is present.

My words come rising to the surface,  
sometimes bubbling gently upward  
flowing into a streambed,  
sometimes bursting forth,  
cascading down precipitous cliffides,  
this paper vessel hardly adequate  
to catch the contents pouring forth.

We are all deep rivers flowing,  
our presence rising  
to the surface in language  
to express  
a moment of our being.

## BITTERSWEET MOMENT

I watch you searching for those words  
in the honeycombs of your mind,  
And my tears form, slipping down the strings  
that sing my heart.


A soft lament  
for the thoughts unspoken  
I will not hear.

## ON FORGETTING

I forgot to tell you something.  
It must have been important  
because,  
in remembering  
that I forgot,  
- now that you are gone -  
waves of sadness wash away my memory.

It disappears beneath the surface of the sand  
with a discreet disregard for me.

But you,  
I will remember always,  
even though I forgot  
the something I was going to tell you.



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