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The Shallows

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The Shallows · *Debora Greger*

Rolling pants' legs, bundling skirts,
they have come down the shore with gunnysacks,
birdcages, dresses knotted together —
tonight not the moon but a run of smelt
silvers the shallows, night water's deep opacity.
Gray gone black, the wet sand chills, floor-hard
as long as, like those boys, I don't stand still.
Coaching and taunting, a chorus of spring frogs,
they leap the fish. Even the woman I've seen
walking daily in the village is here, the one
with her arm in a sling and a three-legged dog.
Her slowed passage rippling the crowd,
she's the domestic tamely obscured
by the raucous dark. Down from this inlet,
a basket of lights lists where the family living
on the grounded freighter finishes another
tilted day. Finally, I think, that canted home
would seem no longer maddening or novel
but cramped like any other. Out in its vast
and watery front yard, below the level of all this,
a cold current tunnels unremittingly north.