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Adventure on the High Seas

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MARY DONNELLY

Adventure on the High Seas

Somehow it falls on me
to save myself from myself.
The swashbuckling me
swooping down
at just the right moment
on the heaving incompetent
ingenue of a me.
Clogging back and forth
on a plank of cheap formica.
Protecting my thinning virtue
from the raping, pillaging horde
that bears my sideways grin.
Tiger sharks in the water
with my eyes. Knots tied tightly
in the shapes of my teeth and nails.
Three curiously birth-marked sails
pregnant with the breeze.
And there in the nest, overseeing it all,
a one-eyed, teak-legged, hook-
handed captain, victim
of poor peripheral vision
and the garbage disposal
in our California kitchen.
How he cackles
with my caffeine cough
But from bow to stern
is there one resembling none?
Perhaps the neutral parrot,
who, in the end,
thieves the treasure from us all.
The only employee who fights
decently with sword and dagger
and knows the proper trade winds
by which to steer
the damned ship home.