

Good Friday Shrapnel

I'm pretty sure Jesus talked to me
in a dream last night,
while I was tucked beneath my sheets.

I dreamt of water,
a vast body of water...
I think maybe it was the ocean.

The morning sun had settled in the sky
and I was swimming alone.

A stern voice cried out to me to be careful.

The voice sounded
worried and weary.
But I didn't listen;
I just kept swimming alone.

I swam past the desolate pier.
I swam past the bouncing buoys.
I swam and I swam and I swam,
until my mundane life began
to disappear.

I let the sun soaked water embrace
my tired body. I could feel the sun
baking my back into a crispy shade
of salmon pink. I let the smell of salt
and brine sting my nostrils. With every
inhale I felt the moist evaporation
resisting in my lungs.

I swam past an old rusty, red dredge
and vaguely noticed the commotion
on the auxiliary tender anchored
by it's side. Until...

I heard the screaming protest of
metal shards exploding.

I can remember feeling
jolted

alarmed
alone and
frightened.

I tried to duck
beneath the surface of the water,
but the shards ripped and pierced
the skin of my burnt back .

I tried to swim fast, but
my arms were too heavy and my body
had grown weak and slow.

Then a man who I thought
was maybe my father,
swam out to meet me.

Appearing out of Nowhere.

“Take a deep breath,” he said,
as he pushed my head and
my body under the water.

I can remember feeling panic.
I thought he was trying to drown me.

But the man was hugging me.

His muscular body twitched
and contorted against my own.
Agony escaped from his mouth,
freeing air bubbles.

I started to drown and then
I woke up, feeling out of breath.
I was lying in a damp sea of
sweaty sheets; salt water
seeping from my pores.

I looked at my palms because
I could have sworn I would find little pieces of
metal shards in my hands.

—*Brittany Violet Long*