

## **Deep Sea Callings<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Two Young Scamps**

Taunts of coins glinting on the sea bottom  
where the cove begins to thirst for depth,  
but only to eyes brave enough to catch the slanting  
light through the current. Deeper still, a man  
in helmet and iron shoes, a father, quarries  
for shellfish. His air hose snags and his tank fouls  
on the sabre-edged rocks: the boys freeze  
into cairns as they witness the ebbing of a life.

### **2. A Reunion in Palermo**

Pensiones stipple the hillside above the docks,  
some perch like castle-keeps; in the courtyards,  
comforted by bolsters and cushions, the locks  
fall away to a knowing touch; and the sloped cobble  
clops to the retreat of shod feet and a donkey braying  
its way to market on the piazza that meets the sea.

### **3. The Contest at Sea**

The reef frets the aquamarine into ancient eyebrows,  
the dive for truth is powered by double-footed fins  
and the kick of earth, if that image is not misplaced;  
seepage from the life above is pinched shut  
by nose-clips, though the ocean weighs like all the sins  
of history. Medieval swordfish, two young men,  
joust for an accolade that will drain a future  
from them, one to ashes, the other to a merman's fate.

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<sup>1</sup> After watching *The Big Blue*.

**Deep Sea Callings (cont.)**

**4. Aftermath**

As the credits fade, the plot and characters  
drowse into hibernation in the dusk  
that settles on my living room. By some misstep  
or pirouette I find myself thinking of how  
my beautiful daughter coaxes meaning,  
and mercy, from the confusion of others;  
my elder son in a just distant city, an unwritten script  
before him, lives a life decidedly his own;  
my younger son, music braiding his hair into a lyre,  
is steadfast as the dawn; and how the glacier  
pulses with love as the farther shore inches closer.