

To a Coastline Tonight

The Seafarer's ink-blotted missive pulses like a moon-warm sail
still fighting the wind and riddled with battled bullets.

Wild syllables splay, besotted with her reading whispers, and
map the exact star route to her wounds: Sibylline, again,
clutching his promised yellow bulbs and words of when,
shudders down the staircase.

A ship lurks on twilight tides of the bay,
like a shimmery fair face, and she gathers her silver-spindled gown
and barefoots across the stones. The wraith that shivers
in shadow of her wake moans a bar of a ghost hymn,
tattling on her scheme the whole castle through
but no guard knows the ghostly cipher code.

*To a northern coastline tonight, to a dear isle,
no matter the danger in the miles, the yearning is too great,
but I cannot stay lest I fall for another false fate.*

The Seafarer is well-versed in magic. Mountain mist and alcohol haze
gray his reddening eyes as he rehearses lines of spells gone tragic

and runaway wives and lonely life counting galleons from the high
perch of an isle lighthouse. Love is the worst of elusive potions,
volatile, complex chemistry of emotions,

and how, too often, Eros has spilled and squelched the work.

He asks her, *what shall become of me if you do not wear my ring?*

She does not know this prophecy and her silence belies
what burns behind her eyes. Sibylline forbids her lips but

they ask anyway and lean into the kiss that shuts the door.
She volunteered her capture, she settled for an earthen rapture,
and a mortal man's faith.

*To a northern coastline tonight, to a dear isle,
I cannot say for I do not know, the yearning is too great
but the sea and its tides will have to wait.*



Asha Gowan, hailing from Durham, NC, writes poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Her subject matter usually revolves around matters of the heart: love, loss, regret, etc. The natural world and its imagery also figure prominently in her work. She has publications in *The Coraddi*, *Blue Mountain Review*, *The Gathering of Poets*, and other magazines and journals.



The Pangolin Review; Issue 7, 8 November 2018