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Emma J. Young

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SNORKEL VIRGIN

Emma J. Young

Wind turns resolve to rags.
I stride the shore seeking the limestone ledge
We were told to look for.
Cruel rocks, sand-engulfed, rip at my feet as I try to go fast.
Don’t bleed, I think. Sharks.
He said there was no need to worry about sharks.
But my mind fills the churning ocean with them
Turns them evil

Waves crashing
I look back, you're trailing
Behind, your face like a dog
I'm dragging towards a bath
Reminding me it's all my idea.
We decide, these rocks ARE the limestone shelf
We were told to look for.
We're on it.
That menacing dark patch beneath the chop
Is the reef.

Tiny, close to shore
In real terms. In mine:
Big and mean and scary
Far and cold and chaotic
Full of submerged things ready to rip open human flesh and fill the water with salty shark-summoning Blood
We stand on the side and peer over
Soft-fleshed city feet balanced
It looks jumpable. Maybe

I squat, trying to see
A big wave slaps my arse
Like a jocular uncle
I look at your doubtful face
I'm wet now.
May as well go.
Courage failing
Only pride left
Too much to bail
Not enough to stop me blurting
Will you come?
You come.
I jump.

It’s not cold
Or deep
Not so scary
Once you're in
But I'm glad you're in with me.
There are stripy yellow fish
Little white zippy fish
Big black fish
Round silver fish like the medals
We deserve.
The mask fills instantly with water
Saving $5 was a mistake
But nothing else was
I feel safe
And lucky