

JELLYFISH:

Reveries Beneath a Pulsing Moon

Go with the tide's slow pull—
no oar, no anchor, no argument—
only water cool and full.

Drift and dissolve—
translucent ribbons trailing in the deep,
cyanine and cold, shimmering
like lanterns that have learned to live without any flame—
pulses of ghostly symmetry,
small moons still learning how to dream.

You glide—
mute oracles of the measureless deep,
unquestioning, unafraid, unhurried—
reading the dark in languages without words.

From your fragile, trembling bell
fall milky egglike constellations—
thousands of soft, spiraling futures
loosed into the heaving, indifferent vast.

No thought—only hunger.
No vision—yet you somehow sense,
with your whole impossible body.
A trembling grammar of touch and tide
writes your will in the currents—
slow, deep, and old as salt.

Into cerulean, rhythmic immensities you float,
trailing your bioluminescent lace
until the sea turtle's ancient beak swings wide,
opening like a door o oblivion,
and folds your entire shimmering existence
into a single, silent, unhurried

The wharf-side café breathed in salt and dusk. Wind shouldered against its wooden slats, slipping through the cracks with a low, hollow whistle that seemed to echo the poem's slow, tidal rhythm. Somewhere below, water slapped against pylons in a patient, repetitive hush—not violent, just inevitable.

"You know—" Philyra leaned back and gestured with her coffee cup toward Ellesha, the gesture loose and languid and precisely aimed, "—this poem is a portrait of some people I know." The words landed differently than she'd intended. Or perhaps exactly as she'd intended—it was sometimes hard to tell with Philyra.

Ellesha went still, then her posture turning as rigid as the barnacled pilings beneath the dock. Her spine straightened, her arms folded across her chest like a drawbridge being raised, and her expression did something slow and complicated behind the eyes. "I'm not a jellyfish," she said. The words came out clipped, precise, spaced like footsteps on uncertain ground.

Soo had been watching the whole exchange from behind the rim of her cup with the focused, unhurried attention of someone who has seen this particular weather pattern before. She set the cup down. The ceramic scraped the table with a small, deliberate sound. "That was a cheap shot, Philyra," she said, not unkindly, but without much give in it either. She pulled her cinnamon bar toward her and chewed with the quiet firmness of someone delivering a verdict.

The mood shifted—subtly, but unmistakably. Philyra exhaled a dry laugh, though it came a fraction too late to sound entirely natural. She lifted her hands in exaggerated surrender, palms open, while her eyes drifted briefly upward as though petitioning some invisible arbitrator for patience. Where, she wondered aloud, had everyone's sense of humor gone? The comment was meant lightly—surely that was obvious. Or perhaps, her tone suggested, the problem was not the joke, but the inability to take one.

But the air had already changed. The tide below kept moving. The wind pressed in again. And for a moment, the three of them sat suspended—like something drifting just beneath the surface—uncertain whether they were carried by the current... or quietly caught in it. The water kept slapping the pylons below. Patient. Repetitive. Unhurried. Snap.

- T Newfields

Beg.: 1996 Shizuoka ☆ Fin.: 2026 Shizuoka

