

On Heeding the Call

By Susan Tutt

I hear a voice in my head tonight, hands in
dishwater.

Nothing glamorous going on here,
everything is quite ordinary.

But she speaks anyway, doesn't mind
if I'm not ready.

"Row me away from the shore," she says, beckoning. "Row me away from
the shore," I try, tentative.

I will sail out far enough
that landfall needs imagining, great green
waves roll under me,
and I can drift, suspended in possibility.

"Row me away from the shore," she says. "Row me
away from the shore," I say.

I will stand at the helm of this worthy craft and gaze
into obscurity,
almost-lost in dense, salt-heavy fog,
where unknown lands unfurl just out of sight, and any
kind of future is possible.

I will be ready when the fog lifts and drifts, revealing
new vistas only I can see.

"Row me away from the shore," she says. So I row.

Adrift now, untethered,
I plant my feet on either side of the gunnels and stand,
bent-kneed, finding my sea legs. All around me,
boundless blue sea-and-sky. "Jump in," she says.
I dive over the side, immerse myself
in the ancient, watery dreams of seafarers. It feels like
home.

I surface, and tread water,

my limbs finding their own rhythm, effortless. Slowly, the fog thins and lifts and light blazes in, the water glinting brilliant as star fire.

“See that island over there?” she asks. “Swim!” And I do.

I swim towards hope.
I swim towards another beginning. I swim
like my life depends on it.

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For Susan, “... creative writing has always been an act of clarifying and refining how I feel. Poetry makes me cut through the bulkiness of everyday life to get down to the essential meaning of my experiences. At the same time, it often leads me towards the bigger picture, the broader strokes of life. This mysterious balance keeps me coming back again and again.”