

fishtails, sea fairies, drowned saints etcetera
by Rochelle Rosales

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the starlight weaves

small ripples in their lake.

pebbles skip, hopscotch

for serpents in shadows.

their mouths full of liquid moon,

laughing, three rows of teeth.

they ask:

how does the Sky taste?

is it true that her Stars drip bright honey?

are they cold, are they crisply-edged,

are they meant to be held?

and does the Moon know we are here?

we see her face in our reflections

i say:

do you remember the Sun?

how she (in those sweeter times) kissed

your face awash with blush?

so too, the touch of a night star spills,
coyly slips,
onto her admirer
and spreads—quietly spreads—
illuminating something small
(your little fingernail, your gentle face,
you, yourself in entirety, ignited)

to cup a Star in your hands is to hold
the roughened skin of an Ancestor
the roughened skin of a Mother

*i stop to wonder: if we are of stardust,
then are we of ashes, too?
i ask nobody,*

i tell you:
the burning is Familial.
it is Adaptive. it is Instinctual.

will you remember?

nod, nod, nod—three luminous heads

bobble atop the moonwater.

their tails—aflicker with the light

of a million Mothers.

a million fishscales—aflame

in a midnight lake.