

Katja Larsson, *The Earth Will Be Buried at Sea*
6 October–12 November 2016

Cecilia Hillstrom Gallery:

Strange heart beating

When I first saw the *Blue Ruin* I heard wind that was very distant but very clear. I'd been in a habit of thinking very hard about seeing something and wishing it was of me and within me: not like a thin veiled laced white curtain where I would know all of the marks by the pronounced detail, but where I would start to adore the veil, be able to be as still as it. Not much had changed but I was now with a new wing span as wide as the light required of me, choking, smiling as the frame. When I first remembered *Blue Ruin* it felt so big to think about. It had already smoothly filled my memory up. In it is so much.

Small things like pearls and oil can go not only to purpose an entire industry or someone's motorbike but they can also stand in for remembering or forgetfulness. In Monira Al Qadiri's story, *Choreography with Alien Technology*, about the Nahham pearl divers and the waters of the Gulf Coast before the manufacturers came, the pearl is the symbol or the vehicle that carries with it the story of loss and erasure as well as the erasure of the individual stories of pearl divers, too. Pearls are smoothers. Maria Fusco also writes something unforgettable that a tiny fossil of the heart of a 55 million year old Eohippus may be burned in the engine of one refill of a Ford in Texas in 1975, and the rhythm goes on and on. I wondered at this stage if words could be fossils, too.

Thoughts and wills and wishes are in Katja Larsson's work like empty shelves in ovens and freezers, and motorbikes and rocks and airbags made of stone or heart or lung or breath. *Wind in Bodies is Called Breath* has attitude. It has a small spikey fin and I love it. Sometimes I remember it as a device that may be planted into something else to help it run or live, and sometimes it seems that it was so heavy it dropped to the bottom of the ocean where its nostrils became its tiny fin, precious and formed but barely noticeable in the dark. It, too, is smooth, or has been smoothed.

There was a lone deer antler sitting on a metal fence near our beach. The antlers were infrequent and very dry compared to the kelp that kept being washed up with every wave. Both, though, seem to be the top or the end or edge of something, the head of something. Katja Larsson gathered both sorts of heads and later swapped them, as though they had touched in the car on the way home. Antlerkelp, formerly kelp, is dry, more brittle than I've ever seen a bone be, rare, and unsure in its outline, while kelp-antlers are wet with water droplets and soft and full as if whatever is now running through them has flowed right into their pointy extremities. I imagine all deer now drinking from the sea by having wet horns, and slowly, wet skulls.

What had changed them was a kind of magic, an invisible vehicle that took characteristics and traits and made them interchangeable between things and bodies, regardless of surface boundaries. It is easy and slippery and relaxing to think about sea water and humans being connected in this way. In Italo Calvino's *Blood, Sea* two characters merge with the water that they are surrounded by and they become more and more immersed and more and more wavy as their blood and the sea water becomes the same thing. It is true that our blood is made up of a mineral arrangement also found in the ancient ocean and standing on the beach's rocks we think about this intimacy.

Qfwfq is the tiny protagonist in Calvino's story. She is everywhere. I imagine her as a she. She is a word that describes a volume of blood, like a drop. She is concise like an acoustic voice but in the largest cathedral in the world. My strange heart continues to beat in thoughts that she is a fossil too, a wet fossil, if possible. Total transformation takes place all around me since *Blue Ruin* and it is unreachable and lovely.

Sarah Boulton

Sarah Boulton is a British artist and writer based in London. Recently published in Best British Poetry 2015, Tender Journal 2015 and Jupiter Woods 2016. Recent exhibitions include Cell Project Space, London, ArtArea in Tbilisi and Unna Way in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.