



'Mackenzie at the Bow'

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Mackenzie at the Bow

Erin Lee Mock

The girl with green hair and a millennial name
is not ashamed to hold her wrist out,
bearing scars and a tattoo
marking her suicide attempt.

Sometimes I think no one is exempt
from fastening on the glittering anchor
that cuts down through the sea.
But maybe it's just people like Mackenzie and me.

She wore it without fuss, it was just a mark
to remind her that she isn't dead. Alone
in bed in the heat and the dark,
I thought about what I do

to remember I'm alive:
bruises, bourbon, and my bare hand
in the beehive. The jaws and soft knuckles
of people I don't know. Pounding

until my eardrums ring. Nicotine.
I realized I meant mostly swallowing things.
To remind myself I am not dead,

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I find ways to forget.

But now I consider boats
with white sails,
wind that whips in my face,
but softens over my shoulders,

oatmeal soaps,
oatmeal with brown sugar,
oatmeal of being loved
after everything I've done.

The day was so hot
except on the water.
Mackenzie at the bow
points out sights as we skim.

Maybe everyone knew all of this before I did.