



carcass of a sea monster

But what of the chary fish?
Imprisoned in glass taverns,
calm and quiet.
Drunk on that which keeps them alive.

Are they dead, unmoved by atrocity, or kindness?
Perhaps, perhaps they let on more than we know,
secret and omniscient.
Life's true narrators, authors—or maybe raconteurs.

Have you seen how they stare in the deep, in the silence?
More aware of the world than they appear to be;
comedy or tragedy,
they are secretly judging your life.

All walls are TV screens or mirrors. Stupid, you didn't know?
The monsters watch you but they cannot talk,
seething but mute;
they swim in the raging water of impotent tears.

But are the chary fish gods?
Gods fed regularly and have their habitat cleaned.
Omnipotent beings or sea monsters,
hiding in the sand, in the detritus of life.

Are all beliefs this frail?
Like manna falling from a false sky,
substantive or semblant,
like cloudy water disposed of and replaced with supposed purity

Poet's Exegesis

The poem “carcass of a sea monster” is an experimental poem, written in a moment of self-reflection and questioning after a church visit made obligatory by my strict Catholic grandparents.

As a freethinker living in a highly religious community steeped in strong cultural traditions, this visit really struck me and made me realise how isolated and alone I felt without the safety net of belief and faith in a higher power. And this poem is a representation of that confusion and disorientation from feeling untethered to a faith.

The title, “carcass of a sea monster”, reflects my honest and inherent fear of religion, as seen in the comparison of the concept of deities to “monsters”. The word “carcass”, in particular, is a reference to how I try to cut off or run away from my feelings about religious topics, thereby in my own way *killing* these “monsters”.

Biography

Isabella Ocampo is a poet based in Singapore. A theatre student by day and an aspiring writer by night, she is determined to explore the world through her passion for words.

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