

The Young Woman Swimming

by Agnes Ezra Arabella

She stepped in
like ice alone
could save her
she dived,
slicing the wave
with her body
her fresh pony tail
submerged
like a silk scarf
then swam moving the
water away
like whirlpools
could hold her buoyantly
save her from the headache
whispering words
They had been there all night
like a rocking chair
the crisp Atlantic
close to Cape Cod
air.
The pull of the waves
and the tide was
an amethyst
for a moment
purple and pale blue.
A fire
Too lovely for
a drowning.
A drowning

that first starts by
being swallowed by
a wave.
the kind that goes up
the nose
and feels like the whole
head is being
submerged in water.
The kind that stings
the back of the nostril
and feels like your
mother has washed
your mouth out
with soap
to float
Solo
Dead man
toes pointing to the sky
She thought of
Anne Boleyn at the guillotine.
"Annabel"
The name floated in her head
the name
"Annabel"
The one eyed cat her
neighbor had found
under the enclosed porch
The cat was left
during the Pandemic
could not be afforded anymore
Poor destitute fool
charmed her way in
through the basement window
And shrieking bloody murder at 5 am
Sometimes Annabel would sleep

and use her head as a pillow
She remembered,
He said,
"No I have to go."
He wanted to find the comet
at 3 in the morning.
She told him to take a picture for her
The elements electric
Telephone wire fossils
run the sky.
But, remember you
cannot capture the tail
of a comet on a cellphone.
You need a slower exposure.
You need a Tripod to put the
camera on.
She floated the dead man's float,
Getting the water
in her nose and mouth,
When the waves came in from the faster
moving motor boat
went over the waves
leaving a wave of surf
to flip over her
buoy head as she looked into
a very blue sky
Clouds that looked like
pulled cotton balls on
her dresser
She wanted to,
"Flee on her donkey,
from the madhouse
before it was too late,"
She wanted him to touch her
on the couch

as they lay watching television.
She wanted him to look into
her eyes
and see her
She wanted him to lick her ear
Like a lollipop
The unsettled girl with her voices and the
lovely girl with her graces
Her ability to turn the world at every angle
Prism like
Optical illusion after optical illusion
warped but crystal like
in beaming reflection when the
sun hit
just right
More holy than an evil eye
The crystal prism produced
light
as sharp as a razor blade
She wanted him to love this
The prism
but he never knew how she was
The voices beating through the night
So secret
Safety
Safety
was a rock
she wanted to swim to
She wanted to believe
she could be more lucid.
He gave her a red miniature rose
from his garden
he grew it
on the front yard patio
She put it behind her ear

and drove
with it
all the way home.
Home-she would return to herself
Like her dead man's float
She lifted herself out of the water,
Licking off the salt
on her lips,
staring into a well
of dug out sculpted sand.

