

JACQUELINE KOLOSOV

Poems by Jacqueline Kolosov

Swimming Off Jericho Beach

The waves carry me
 toward the garden
 of my grandmother. In the shifting
light, seaweed becomes peonies, and
 the water whispers softly
 so that I hear her voice
 within the voice of the sea.

 Here I find dogs swimming out
to fetch driftwood, and a girl
 stretching legs strong enough
 to dance the swan in Tchaikovsky's ballet.
Further out soars the high, white bird
 whose wings return
 the ocean's rhythms. He is keeping watch
over the girl and the lovers on shore,
 over all the children, young and old,
 surf yearning toward brown ankles.

 The ocean asks me
 to come inside
 where the small girl grows
 a tail of incandescent green
and swims into silences
 withing the ocean
 and ourselves.

 Deep within
the ocean, my grandmother is singing,
 and the small girl reaches
 for my hand.

Stitches

She remembers the crinkled edges of her father's eyes
when he spoke to her in his Reading-Aloud voice;

the steeped-in smell of the kitchen where
her mother hummed, the stove scrambled eggs,

and the tiptoe-nearness of cupboard meant
spoonfuls of jam and a mouth furry with peanut butter-

bread crumbs. She remembers the shimmering silent
feel of a sky brimful of stars. How she felt

all glossy and silver bright, a bubble floating
above the moss green land. Falling

asleep with moonbeams on her eyelids
and the let-me-in-voice of the sea when the sun slipped

out of sight. How she waited for the sea fingers
to slip in through shuttered windows

to share secrets with her. When sudden thunder brought
a sister to her bed, how they stayed up all night

telling stories, basking in that hunkered-down, bunked-in
feeling, all flannel warmth inside. She remembers

the soft hips of a grandmother who took her
to ride on trains, her ancient knowledge

sharp as the peppers pickling in glass jars on the sill.
And the wheat-colored haunches the dog played like a banjo.

How she loved the sinking-down feel of his coat
on slick nights when it rained,

the amber brightness of his eyes when she licked
a dripping ice cream cone. She remembers

when she didn't need to color in the silences, when
words stood upright. The everyday had happy edges then

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And the fractures in the good china. On white
tablecloth days, they ate off the good plates anyway.

Jacqueline Kolosov's poems have recently appeared in *Poetry*, *The Malahat Review*, *The Texas Review*, and *Cimarron Review*. Poems are forthcoming in *Passages North*, *Windhover*, and *A Room of One's Own*. She has also published two chapbooks: *Danish Ocean* (Pudding House Press, June 2003) and *Faberge* (Finishing Line Press, October 2003). Currently, she teaches creative writing and literature at Texas Tech University. She recently decided to return to her maiden name for her publications. She has published previous work under the name of Jacqueline McLean.