

T A B

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**SPECIAL ISSUE: California Coastal Commission Poetry Contest**

K-1st

**CONSUME** by **Robert Becerra**, p. 7

**OCEAN WATER** by **Nash Williams**, p. 8

**WAVES** by **Emma Lucchesi**, p. 10

2nd-3rd

**ALCATRAZ** by **Japleen Dhillon**, p. 11

**A DAY AT THE BEACH** by **Alexis Lavelly**, p. 12

**HAD THE OCEAN BEEN MY FRIEND** by  
**Siena Dunn**, p. 14

4th-5th

**WONDERING WAVES** by **Abigail Alford**, p. 15

**I AM A FISH IN THE BIG BLUE SEA**  
by **Fitzpatrick Brockway**, pp. 16-17

7th-9th

**LAST SUMMER** by **Will Tolmie**, p. 19

**OPUS** by **Sarah Feng**, p. 20

**TWILIGHT BEACH** by **Victor Li**, p. 21

**BETWEEN** by **Elizabeth Nail**, pp. 23-24

10th-12th

**STORY MADE FROM OCEAN** by  
**Joyce Ker**, p. 25

**TIDE POOL LOVE** by **Kate Lin**, p. 26

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THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

T A B U L A  
*p o e t i c a*

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**SPECIAL ISSUE NOTE: CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION POETRY CONTEST**

*TAB* Volume 5, Issue 3, is dedicated to the winners and honorable mentions in the California Coastal Commission K-12 Poetry Contest. *Tabula Poetica* assists with the judging and recognizes Chapman University Graduate Assistants Jenni O'Rourke and Mike Gravagno, who coordinated the process, and undergraduate judges Alexis R. Allen, Marina Burandt, Julie Linh Nguyen, and Alana Reiss.

## DESIGN STATEMENT

The print issues of *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics* are special editions, each published at the beginning of the calendar year. These issues reflect the mission of Tabula Poetica: The Center for Poetry at Chapman University to create an environment that celebrates poetry in various forms and venues. The annual print issue engages the reader with poetry as a material object and asks that the reader negotiate between image and text. The design of the print issues does not assume a traditional role of quietly framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading experience. The special print editions of *TAB* continue to experiment and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

The 2017 print issue examines the effects of noise and text delivered to the reader as visual volumes on multifaceted layers. Textures and patterns act as a sounding board, adding a variety of tones intended to create an atmospheric pairing with the poems themselves.

Electronic issues, on the second Wednesday of every other month, follow this printed issue. Using these differing formats—print and digital—allows experimentation with design and materiality in a time when print and electronic dissemination coexist. *TAB* will not force either format to adapt to the other. The reading experience in virtual spaces is different than that of a printed journal. The electronic issues are shaped by Open Journal Systems, a federally funded, open-access system from the Public Knowledge Project designed to serve the public good globally. While the electronic files can be printed, each electronic issue are formatted for reading on the screen. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience, rather than to mimic a print version. *TAB* also makes use of the audio possibilities of digital dissemination.

To order a copy of the print issue from 2016, 2015, 2014, or 2013, please send a check for \$10 made out to Chapman University to *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics*, Department of English, Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866. *TAB* is available at the AWP Bookfair.

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Orange, CA 92866

Contributors receive complementary copies and can request additional copies. *TAB* is distributed at the AWP Conference each year.

# **Kindergarten–1st grade**

**ROBERT BECERRA**  
**1st grade, La Puente**  
*Winner*

**NASH WILLIAMS**  
**1st grade, Morgan Hill**  
*Honorable Mention*

**CONSUME**

Consume consume that's all we do  
We take and take and don't regret  
We need to know what's best at end  
Our oceans are at risk today  
Because of all the things we toss away.

—Robert Becerra

OCEAN WATER

The water goes swish, swish,  
Swish.

The shark goes bite, bite, bite  
on a tiny fish.

The water goes swish, swish, swish  
through the gills of a tiny  
Fish.

—Japleen Dhillon

## **2nd–3rd grade**

**EMMA LUCCHESI**

**3rd grade, Elk Grove**

*Winner*

**JAPLEEN DHILLON**

**3rd grade, Fresno**

*Honorable Mention*

**ALEXIS LAVELY**

**3rd grade, Santa Rosa**

*Honorable Mention*

**WAVES**

Do not stop me waves.  
You can't stop me now.  
The sun is shining on me.  
The sand is so soft.  
And it's like a blanket.

I can see the mountains.  
They are so beautiful!  
Like you! You! You!

You can't stop me now!  
I'm like a wave! A wave!  
A wave! The sun is shining on me!

The waves are so beautiful!  
You can't stop me now waves!  
Even if the waves are so high!  
You can't stop me now!  
I can climb the rocks  
And you can't get me!!

You can't stop me now...

—Emma Lucchesi

**ALCATRAZ**

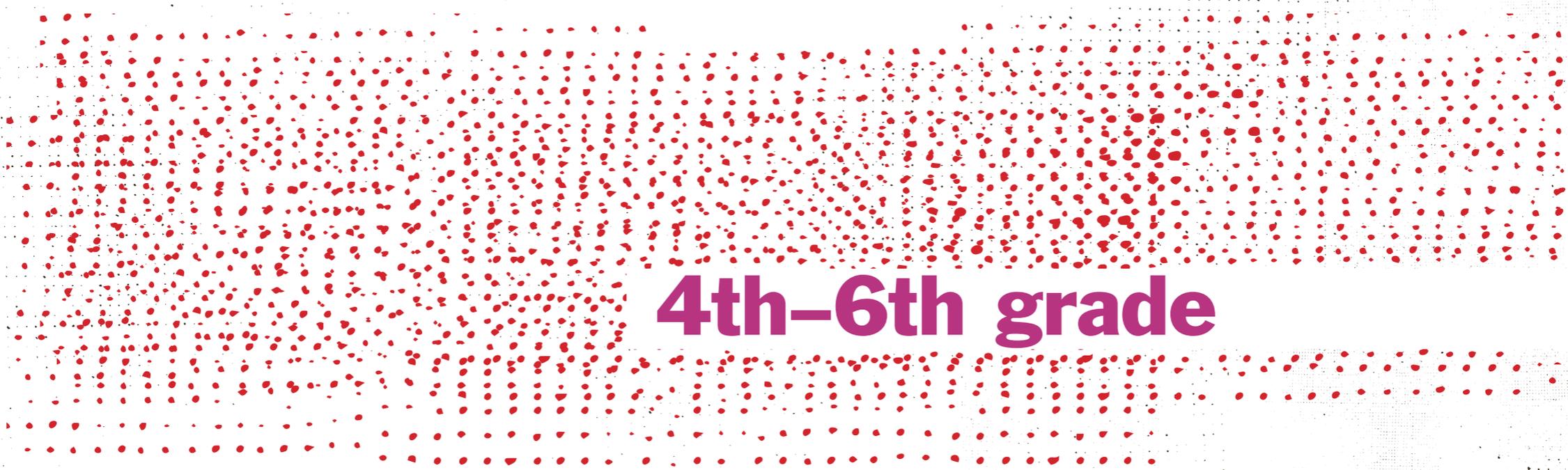
Where the prisoners would cry,  
As they planned to try  
To escape this frightful place,  
Now many birds,  
Come in large herds,  
To breed and raise their young

—Nash Williams

**A DAY AT THE BEACH**

Rolling, tossing,  
Salty spray,  
The sea calls to me,  
On a sunny day.  
Frothy, foamy,  
Shimmering waves,  
Frolicking in the sea,  
Splashing in a stony cave.

—Alexis Lavelly



## **4th–6th grade**

**SIENA DUNN**

**5th grade, Palo Alto**

***Winner***

**ABIGAIL ALFORD**

**5th grade, Hollister**

***Honorable Mention***

**FITZPATRICK BROCKWAY**

**4th grade, San Francisco**

***Honorable Mention***

**HAD THE OCEAN BEEN MY FRIEND**

Had the ocean been my friend,  
I would have given it  
All of my truths for safekeeping

All of my darkest secrets,  
Nestled deep into the sand,  
Surrounded by the soothing hum of the waves.  
Waves enveloping my mistakes in life,  
Like buried treasure,  
Never forgotten

Tales I would have written,  
Girls plucking seashells from beaches  
Whose golden shores were  
Like isles of dreamland  
But whose fates were  
Like lines drawn in sand

If the ocean had been my friend,  
I'd have  
Spent off all my loneliness  
Strolling its vast shores,  
I'd have walked with the wind  
Had the ocean been my friend

—Siena Dunn

WONDERING WAVES

Watery waves wonder  
Why their world is so wet.  
As they wake to whistling winds,  
Will they have a new pet?

A swordfish, a seal, a sea slug they have!  
Why not a fox, a fawn or a friendly calf?

I guess they'll never understand.  
They can't have animals who live on land.

—Abigail Alford

**I AM A FISH IN THE BIG BLUE SEA**

I go with the current,  
The current goes with me.  
I follow school into  
The seaweed.  
We feed off algae  
Crab, plankton, and krill.  
Shrimp for dessert.

Big animals and small ones,  
We cower from sharks,  
Hide in the dark.  
I am a fish  
In the  
Big blue  
Sea.

Never stop being hunted,  
Hunted all day.  
Swim, swim,  
Swim away.

Now there are 10,  
Now there are 8,  
Now there are 7,  
Now there are 5,  
Now there are 3,  
Now there is  
Only me.  
I am the last,  
Speeding fast,  
Zooming through the 100 yard dash.

Can you catch me?  
Catch me if you can,  
Catch me, catch me.

—Fitzpatrick Brockway

**WILL TOLMIE**

**7th grade, Tiburon**

***Winner***

**SARAH FENG**

**9th grade, Los Altos**

***Honorable Mention***

**VICTOR LI**

**8th grade, Saratoga**

***Honorable Mention***

**7th–9th grade**

LAST SUMMER

The transit driver veers around the road,  
knocking us from side to side, but  
we don't care:

we're just on our phones or  
picking at the sticky duck tape  
holding the back seat together

~

suddenly, the bus lurches to a stop  
our eyes look out:  
the fog is creeping onto the beach and  
into the sea

~

we grab our boards and  
kick up the hot sand as we run  
we tiptoe across the shoreline  
and into the salty water

~

the waves kiss our faces  
and we laugh at our inability to surf  
crushing seashells as I walk,  
the water climbs up my body

~

one time,  
we catch a big one, but  
the undertow catches us and  
we're sent flying

~

as we rise out of the water  
and into the sweltering sun,  
I look back into the past  
at the sandcastle that the little giggling  
boy is crafting with his mother.  
I smile.

—Will Tolmie

OPUS

the water is quiet in the prelude.

b flat—a white gull shrieks,  
high c—the man on the sidewalk plays his saxophone,

a legato when the sunlight spins and blurs,

Two

Short

Staccatos when the young boy splashes at the silvery water—  
a wizened couple trudges through the sand

the water laps hungrily at the shore,

an arpeggio—a black shell washes

up at my feet

then a pearly white one, worn at the edges

my pruned fingers sliding against them,

a crescendo.

—Sarah Feng

TWILIGHT BEACH

twilight  
Blazing violet  
songs of feathered sirens  
    S o a r i n g

    through the sky.  
People playing, Laughter swaying  
a salted, sandy reverie.  
    steadily breezes

    into the evening Quiet.  
    Sun setting, tides lowing, blue flowing, windows, barnacles closing, umbrellas folding,  
Folding together the day and memories.  
    The Pain of  
stepping on shells  
    seaweed  
    driftwood,  
    drif t i n g sentiments  
Washes away,  
    like footprints  
        on a beach.

—Victor Li

# 10th–12th grade

**ELIZABETH NAIL**

**11th grade, Pasadena**

*Winner*

**JOYCE KER**

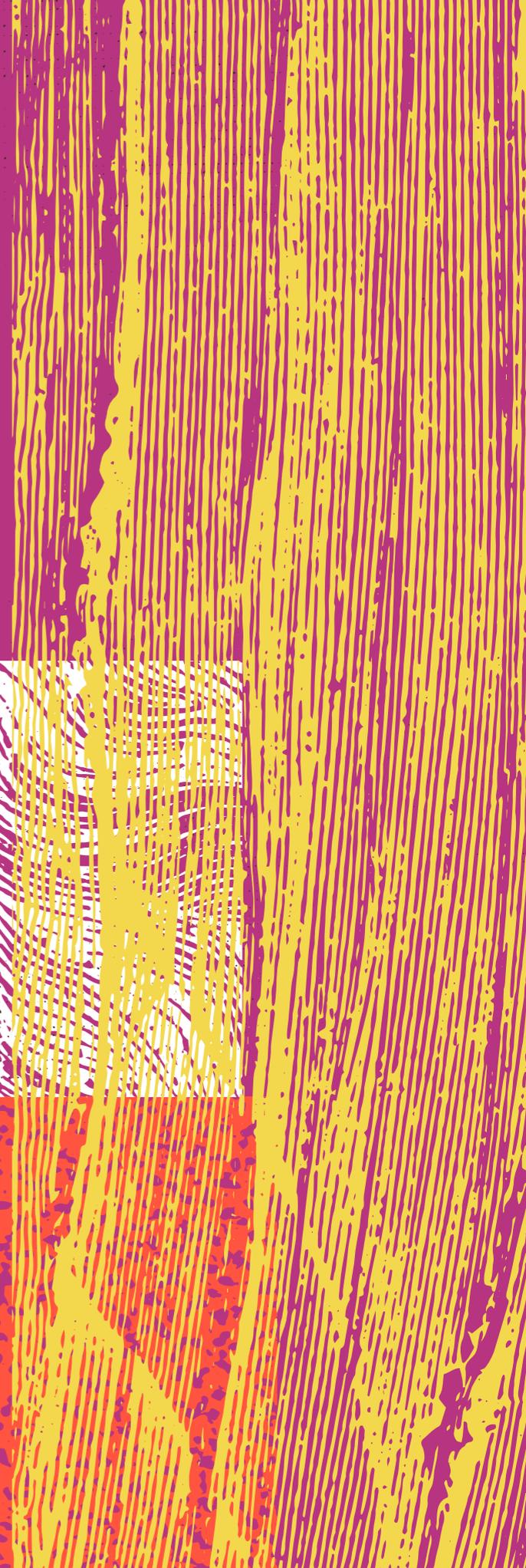
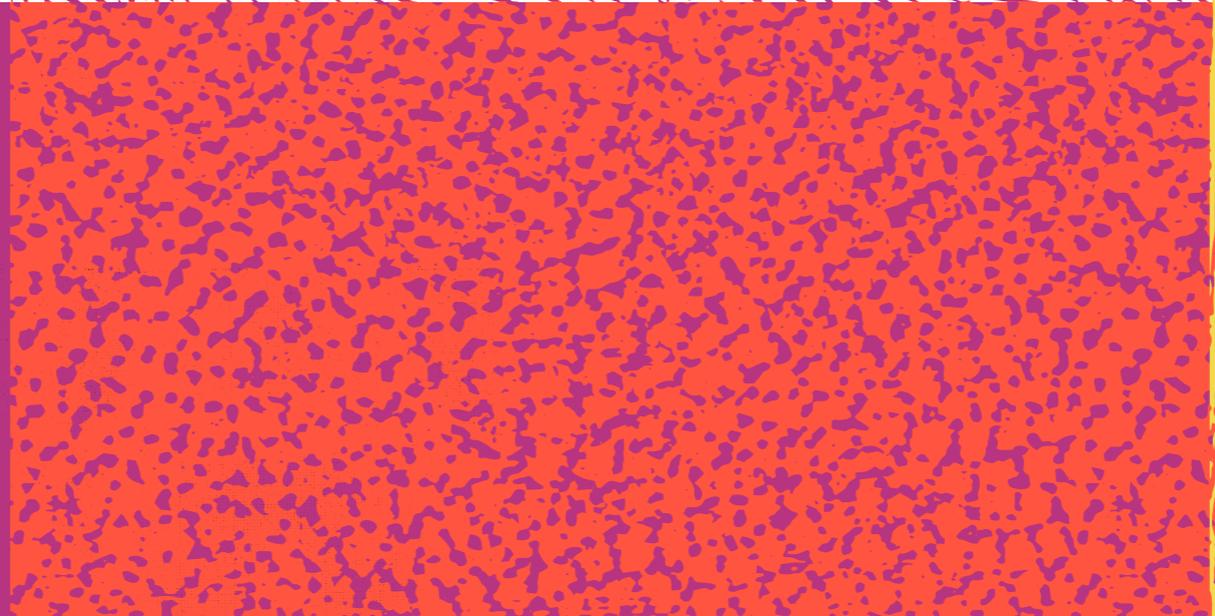
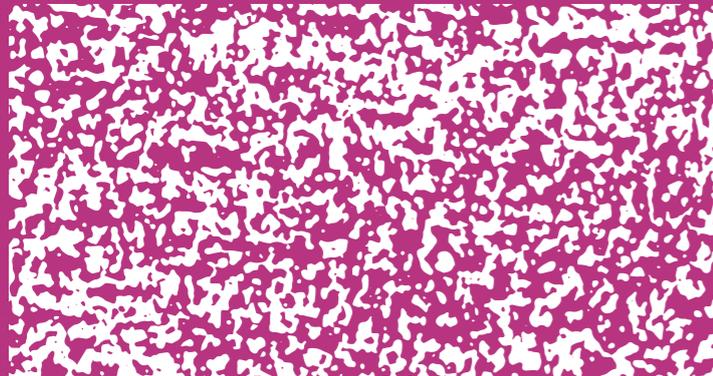
**10th grade, San Jose**

*Honorable Mention*

**KATE LIN**

**12th grade, Fremont**

*Honorable Mention*



**BETWEEN**

what if people moved like hills  
rolling ambling undulating  
or like ocean waves

they are hills, are waves  
ever-shifting rises  
watery knolls  
ancient

our ancestors saw the hills  
the same way we do  
and the oceans looked on our forefathers  
as they planted their flags on their peaks

we drove up Highway 1  
a summer's weeklong vacation  
passed Bixby Creek Bridge  
as the light was turning golden

my father used to take road trips with his own  
from landlocked Moore  
to the shores of Galveston

there are few hills in either city  
but many in between  
and many in the nationless waves

the hills of my California coast  
some made of water  
some made of earth  
blend seamlessly

like the currents connecting  
perpetually through space and time  
the Gulf of Mexico  
to the Pacific Ocean

like the currents connecting  
perpetually through space and time  
my father to his father  
to me

—Elizabeth Nail

STORY MADE FROM OCEAN

*Eleven* when I nearly drowned  
He was watching  
I stepped on a sea urchin while snorkeling  
Spikes dug into my skin  
like shark teeth  
Currents of electricity  
swam through my foot  
as water swallowed me  
In my left temple a pulse  
my brain pounding  
I could not breathe

*Thirteen* when I met him  
Swore I loved him  
He put his hands around my waist  
“A bit chubby here”  
His words stung like brine  
pushing me underwater  
deep into a chasm  
Waves hissed at me  
their salt-tongues encrusting my body  
Seaweed groped my legs  
coiling around my chest, squeezing  
I could not breathe

*Fifteen* when I learned to float  
Tossed his words of shrapnel  
into the ocean’s abyss  
I’m made of sea glass  
Jagged-tumbled  
Shining  
Broke harpoons on my skin  
Snapped spears on my neck.

—Joyce Ker

### TIDE POOL LOVE

He tells me that his love for me is like the ocean—  
vast, deep, and filled with glittering sunsets and marbled skies.  
I want to tell him that the ocean isn't just a static, picture-perfect snapshot  
to be displayed on some postcard hastily mailed home.  
No, our love is the ebb and flow of tide pools.  
At low tide, it teeters dangerously upon the slick, jagged rocks.  
It's the tentative scuttle of the hermit crab, poised to retreat back into its fortress,  
the shuttering of the anemone exposed to the harsh rays of the sun,  
the stiff spines of the sea urchin raised in defense.  
But then the ocean swells and high tide brings a new wave of excitement.  
Our love becomes the opaleye breathlessly darting beneath the pensive surface,  
the blooming of anemones and mussels,  
the vibrant sea stars reflecting the starry night sky.  
But most of all, our love is the resilience of the tide pool creatures,  
Able to withstand the crash of thunderous ocean waves  
And firmly planted down with tube feet through both low and high tide.

—Kate Lin