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Design Statement

The annual, distinctive print issue of *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics* engages the reader with poetry as a material object and asks the reader to negotiate between image and text. The design does not assume a traditional role of quietly framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading experience and continues to experiment with and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

The 2019 print issue was *Tab Journal*’s first issue driven by inclusive design and low-vision principles. With this new print issue, we extend our effort to create an engaging and increasingly equitable experience for all abilities based on inclusive design.

This 2022 volume is our tenth issue. It is no coincidencethat this volume, in both the print and online issues, echoes the durability and usefulness of aluminum and tin, the traditional tenth anniversary gifts. This volume, launched with a large-format print issue, reflects and shines and is our gift—from the staff and the contributors—to literary culture.

The design for this year’s *Tab Journal* emerges from a year of recognizing the complexities of choice, drawing boundaries, and acknowledging multidimensional anxieties of being between a rock and a hard place. As we continue to experience the compromises that go hand in hand with the pandemic, as we continue to face the relentless considerations of safe and dangerous spaces, this volume surveys concepts of shared corners and shelters, of physical and metaphorical places and spaces where individuals, pods, and communities take refuge.

The visual language in this volume draws on the mining of minerals—Arsenopyrite, Aluminum, Platinum, Tin, Tennantite, Titanium, Silver, Volcanic Rock—and a back-and-front scientific identification system to connect author and poem. The January print issue was digitally printed with two colors of ink (metallic and black), then scored, die-cut, and folded to achieve a
poster booklet. It is, then, two forms in one, poster and booklet, each of which offers a different visual and tactile experience of scale and perspective. The online issues extend the visual design and transform it—rather than replicate it—for the screen.

To request one or more copies of the print issue, please use the Contact form on the Tab Journal website.

Special Issue: California Coastal Commission Poetry Contest
Every year, Tabula Poetica selects finalists for the Coastal Poetry Contest for K-12 students hosted by the California Coastal Commission. This year, Chapman University students in Tab Journal Editor Anna Leahy’s MFA poetry writing class served as the mid-level judges.

Tab Journal is thrilled to share the poems of young Californians as part of this collaboration with the community and Annie Frankel, the Public Education Program of the California Coastal Commission. You can also view the winning art and poetry selections at the California Coastal Commission’s website: https://www.coastal.ca.gov/art-poetry/mm21/winners2021.html#poetry2021.
Kindergarten–1st Grade

Winner
Wyatt Thompson, Grade 1
*Wilderness in My City*

Honorable Mention
Zoe Corona, Grade 1
*The Pacific Ocean*

Kavya S. Iyer, Grade K
*A Busy Day at the Beach*
Wilderness in My City

I hear the leaves whistle.
   The palm trees shake and rustle.

I see the waves crash.
I see nature...cactus blooms,
   salty ocean.

I feel the sand, rocks bumping against
my feet, crabs pinching my heels.

I hear cars racing, people talking,
trains rumbling.

   There's a lot of wilderness but
   also city all around us.

I'm here where I belong,
   where
   you and me are
together.

—Wyatt Thompson
The Pacific Ocean

I love when the waves touch my toes.
It feels like I am home.
The sand in my toes fills my heart.
The seashell close to my ear.
I can feel the ocean in my heart.
Blue ocean.
White sand.
I am happy.

—Zoe Corona
A Busy Day at the Beach

The Sea...I love the Sea...
The shells, the sea glass,
The Sand dollars, the kelp,
I love it all so much!
I sway with the waves
As they crash on my feet
And I watch it sadly as it goes back
I already had a busy day
It is time for me to go home
As I go home in the car
I wave at the waves
Just as another one comes back.

—Kavya S. Iyer
2nd–3rd Grade

Winner
Adelaide Harrison Cook, Grade 3
Whale Journey

Honorable Mention
Kavisha Gupta, Grade 2
I Want to Live in the Ocean

Julien A Mecum, Grade 3
Hermit Crab (at Buckhorn Cove)

Saoirse Tien-Rickard, Grade 3
Untitled
Whale Journey

On our journey along the California coast
We stop for snacks but have to keep moving because time is precious and seasons are changing.
Onward we go to find a warm haven
So many sea creatures around me
starfish, jellyfish and even sea anemones

We don’t go close to the seashore
But when I look down it’s sand galore

Water in my fins, jumping up with the winds

The waves crash on the surface as I glide through the water
I shoot up and then down it makes a big splash all around.
But before I disappear I fan my tail to show that I am a whale!
The sun is going down as I settle into the warm current.

—Adelaide Harrison Cook
I Want to Live in the Ocean

I know you all have
Lots of fun,
You play there deep down
And comes up
To get heat from the Sun.

I know you all are,
full of colors
Red, yellow, white, green
Pink and cream.

I know deep-down there are,
Sharks, starfish and giant whales.
And flocking fluttering,
Octopus, lobster, fish with sails.

I want to live with you all,
Would love to go deep down and become small.

I really wish, I could be a fish
With just one thought, don’t get caught.

—Kavisha Gupta
Hermit crab in his shell,
like a little wishing well.

Teeny-weeny
and very shy,

to see him
you must spy.

—Julien A. Mecum
**Untitled**

Loved ones are always there
But when they've passed
It feels like the world has left without you
The only thing as vast and deep
Is the ocean
Which feels when you weep

—Saoirse Tien-Rickard
4th–6th Grade

Winner
Bony McKnight, Grade 5
Go With The Tide

Honorable Mention
Anusha Garg, Grade 5
Spectator

Emytis Keyhan, Grade 5
The Ocean

Micah Yao, Grade 4
My Magical Place
Go With the Tide

The ocean is calling, 
calling to me, 
it speaks of treasures, 
hidden in the depths of the sea, 
it speaks of ships, buried under 
millennia of sand, 
it speaks of things only it knows of, 
of hidden islands, of a secret land.

The ocean is calling, 
calling to me, 
it speaks of the moon, 
pulling the tide. 
It spins the story of those alive, 
it remembers the ways 
of those who have died. The ocean is 
dangerous, and yet so alive. 
It brings me serenity, 
and reminds me to go 
with the tide.

—Bony McKnight
Spectator

Tears are sad
Are cold
Are mad
The clouds are crying tonight

I see their tears
They hit my ears
My eyes
My body
My mind

My waves, they splash
High and low

My waves, they splash
And they know

A storm is brewing

The clouds are mad

The moon is sad
Clouds angry tears
And Moons sad gaze

Together will they stay
Forever...Always

And I the ocean
Sway and simmer

I the ocean, am the spectator

—Anusha Garg
The Ocean

The waves crash down on me.
The blue water engulfs me as I dive deeper and deeper into the murky liquid
The ocean pulls me as if it wanted to welcome me.
Friendly sea life circles me like they knew who I was.
The seaweed creates a bed of green as if it was expecting me.
A cloud of sand emerges as I thud on the bottom of the sea.
Shells and stones greet me on the seafloor.
A crab scurries past me like it had somewhere to be.
Faster and faster.
I looked up and saw a blurry image of the sun.
The water swayed from side to side.
A small fish intercepts my view.
Then it dashes away.
I was all alone in the ocean.
All alone.
With only the sea to guide me back.

—Emytis Keyhan
My Magical Place

My favorite thing to do is to go tidepooling.
I like it better than video games and ice cream, I’m not fooling.

Although the crashing waves are impressive and fascinating too,
It is the shallow pools, the crevices that amaze me most as I wander through.

Stepping from the millions of grains of sand into a slippery, rocky world,
Gently treading forward, I almost step on a sea snail, its shell swirled.

Crouching, I look into my first large tidepool. What do I see?
I spy a striped fish, two sea stars, and a mint green anemone.

Turning to the pool behind me, water splashes as my eye catches a blur.
It is a shy, maroon octopus retreating into darkness, I’m sure!

Pulled forward by excitement, I encounter more watery nooks and crannies.
Carefully stepping over limpets and barnacles, I see many fish families.

Ancient chitons and purple sea urchins add more delight.
I also see two tiny crabs having a friendly fight.
I leave this magical place feeling enchanted,
hoping that my wish to return here soon will be granted.

—Micah Yao
Winner
Emily Mattea Hembruch, Grade 7
My Home

Honorable Mention
Kyomin Kwon, Grade 7
Beach Therapy

Jessica Liao, Grade 8
The Ocean, Our Home

Aarav Parihar, Grade 8
Crude

Viola Seda, Grade 7
The Sands of Time
My Home

You can have
Your Hawaiian beaches
You can keep
Mexico's bays
Florida's seas
Are all yours
Just leave me
West coast waters
California oceans
Icicle waves
Sinking sand
Jagged cliffs
My roots
Are in this dusty dry dirt
Beneath my bare feet
My family
Lives where rain
Is a celebration
My people
Have a tan
All winter
My weather
Is 70 degrees
Never snow
My home
Is California
Where the hills are pink
As the sun sinks down
Where the ocean
Is never too far away
Where people live
Elbow to elbow
'Cause who wouldn't want to live I
n my beautiful home
Of California

—Emily Mattea Hembruch
Beach Therapy

Sometimes, I like to stand alone here, at the beach
Listen to the waves rolling and hitting the rocks
The sound is loud, but I reach, reach, reach
Reach for the peace that I cannot box
Because, to me, war is fated
It comes and it goes but it never stops
And I’m not talking about the times war waited
I’m saying that there are times when my heart just drops
Because I’m not anyone, I’m just a kid
And I can’t do anything that I want to do
I’m not extraordinary, I’m just mid
And so, I just feel blue
But the beach helps me a lot
It helps me realize who I am
It’s always there for me, and it doesn’t have to be bought
It’s pure and innocent, just like a lamb
And so unlike me, so unlike everything
It’s calming and it’s soothing, it doesn’t pick a fight
The water helps me realize that I’m not nothing
I’m my own person, and I have my own light
Time goes by, and the ocean never ages
While I age, age so much
Perhaps I'll come to the ocean again, let out my rages
Come to the ocean, let myself have a crutch
It was there for me when no one else was
I'll always remember you with a fond smile
And just like the Tooth Fairy, Tinkerbell, and Santa Claus
You helped me get through every trial
You were really a part of my childhood
And for that, I'll never be able to thank you the way I wanted to
And you're not just the word “good”
You're the epitome of everything perfect in the world, and you helped me push through

—Kyomin Kwon
The Ocean, Our Home

We were born of seafoam and ocean tides,
Nourished by the warm sand.
We spent our childhood listening to the hum of the waves,
Hearts beating in time to the seagulls’ cries.

We danced in the light of the full moon,
Searching for a pirate’s lost fortune.
We sung by the edge of the shore,
Shrieking as the ocean tried to pull us in.

Hearts of rolling tides,
Seashell eyes,
Ocean water flowing through our veins,
We are more ocean than land,
More mermaid than human.

Now we live a life of traffic lights and office suites,
The melody of clanking keyboards on repeat.
Our hearts pump blood to the city’s ever-present band,
We are polluted in accordance with our homeland.
As the plastic kills the animals,
We lose a little more of our soul,
Surrounded by blaring lights and the din of the city,
We forget our universal Mother,
The ocean, the world’s natural beauty.

—Jessica Liao
Crude

Night approaches. A dark being enters the sea
Spreading through water, like a wildfire
Staining fish scales,
Silencing the whales’ soft songs,
Casting darkness through the soft currents
Wrapping sea life in the reaper’s cloak.
Born of mother nature, altered for our uses
The faith of our reality depends on this dark and unruly substance

—Aarav Parihar
The Sands of Time

I can remember how it was,
smoke thick in the air, choking my lungs.
the waves crashing, multicolored, a murmuration of plastic.
I tried to find something, a piece of hope, in the rough desolate sands,
but all there was was the weight of collective failure.

Did I forget how the days used to be,
shining bright in immortal youth?
Splashing in the turquoise surf, carefree, unaware?
All I could think of was how broken the world was,
and not of how broken it had been, in my childlike naivete.

Can we fix it, I wondered?
A challenge it is to turn sand back into a stone.
A ray of light took me to the broken waves and we reached,
down into the water, to where the sand touched time.
When we are gone the sand will stay.
Swaying in the lukewarm water, living the California Dream.

I didn’t know back then, what would happen.
Neither do I now.
As the walls around me crumble to dust, I realize.
I do not matter.

–Viola Seda
Winner
Zora Hollie, Grade 11
*Black Girl Surfing*

Honorable Mention
Ethne Anders, Grade 11
*American Pipit*

Sophia Cho, Grade 10
*Oh, How the Waters Live*

Elyse Hwang, Grade 11
*Night Tides, Reimagined*

Emma Keas, Grade 10
*Rainbow Trout*

Christina Li, Grade 10
*I Could Dance on the Seas*

Dilinna Ugochukwu, Grade 12
*Last Night I Dreamed of Huntington Beach*
Black Girl Surfing

_Dedicated to the organization Color the Water who works to make the surfing community a more diverse and supportive one_

Wetsuits that smell like rubber and salt
Pinching my body, in a web, caught
Brown skin getting darker from the sun
Staring at the waves, itching to run because
My place in the lineup is unknown
When no one’s skin matches my tone

Paralyzed by my fears and doubts
Big, dark waves crashing and roaring
Shivering even though it’s not cold
Not having the privilege to be confident and bold
Dolphins and sanderlings and pelicans, floating
Graceful and calm, so sure of where they’re going
And me questioning why I’m even here
If the waves that I’m supposed to ride
Are the ones that I fear
Me questioning whether I belong
When I feel so thoroughly alone
Smiling men with a kind “good morning!”
Them chasing waves I want to, flying high and soaring
Like catching my dreams in a jar
While I sit on my board from afar

Cheers and calls of support
Laughs and “how are you’s?”
Afro curls popping up on a wave
And bouncing all the way to shore
Me watching the pros and playing copycat
Finally feeling brave because
I know if I fall on a wave
My people will still commend me
Light refracting on the water
A rainbow with all the colors
No longer trapped in a web
But held up in one
My feet off the ground

—Zora Hollie
American Pipit

There is a songbird living on the coast
Who runs along the rocks and speckled sand—
With feathers brown and tan just like fresh toast,
He dwells beside the cobalt ocean grand.
As he walks, the pipit bobs his tail and head
And looks for swarms of tasty bugs, and then
He catches ones that have not run away or fled.
The little footprints mark the places he has been.
The plover seems to be the pipit’s twin:
See how across the sand both creatures run—
And yet the pipit is not plover’s kin—
Instead his family is a different one:
Like brighter cousin finch, the pipit sings
A joyful song exalting northern spring.

—Ethne Anders
Oh, How the Waters Live

the waves hush
  dawn sands cough at my feet
  and the strip of footprints molded into the shore, vanish like a breath
    i am the coastal phantom of South Ponto beach
    nothing
  but broken masks and shattered bottles
face shields, latex gloves—all once needed, then discarded

the waves seethe
  invisible organisms lurch and writhe and roar
  Her tides are speckled red with life
  i shudder in apology
    in awe
    in ardor
  the joints of Her waters, clogged with trash and polymer scraps
  Her saline blood, tainted with oily fingerprints and omissions
She lunges, only to stagger when She hits the shore

the waves glister
  dusk salt sprays the shores like pearls
  hear Her healing
as the sun sinks under the horizon night spotlights Her inner-workings
  Her subjects
  Her nanoscopic inhabitants
  oh, how the waters live!
like a pulse, swirls of ghostly plankton barrel through the waves
  with soft cyan hues
  bioluminescent dinoflagellates—teem at the lack of a human shove
  Her tides glow blue
  and circle back to Her depths

—Sophia Cho
Night Tides, Reimagined

soft moonbeams
   peek out from
       behind greying clouds

gently gracing
   the tips
   of rolling waves

with white light
   pale seaglass glimmers
   wet from the
   ocean's
   fresh
   tears

the low tide
   reveals
   an
       eccentric
           collection
               of pools

teeming
   with Neptune's most prized treasures
under twilight's
    s
    pill
        ed     g     a     l     a
            x     i     e     s,
ochre stars and sea urchins
    quietly watch
        the heavens

a small shore crab
    scurries for shelter
from the raw darkness
rockweed and coralline stretch their weary arms
towards the night
    sky

though the waves continue to batter the bluffs,
a sort of peace has
diffused
    fused
cross the
land
between the tides

—Elyse Hwang


Rainbow Trout

The sun hasn’t even set eyes on this side of the shore yet.
Sleepy town. Fingers of fog closing in like a fist about to close.

In the midst of it all—the mist settling into its seat on the horizon,
the sea gently nudging the sand awake—a distant splash.

It slips under and over the swells, laughing.
Belly flashing in the sun like a purple burst of silver lupine,

Crashing froth catches its reds in California Fuchsia and
Creams of Black Sage. Fins sweep into bows.

Spin a thousand droplets down a field of
Cattails in the morning air's current,

Skittish in the streets. Breaths whirlpool ’round lampposts,
Churns—hungry—under park benches.

Daybreak tails each inhale.
Exhale.
A trick of the light, you think,  
Starting back to the pier.

—Emma Keas
I Could Dance on the Seas

i’d always been taught to stay away from the waters, 
that they were wild and coarse and turbulent, 
that they’d drag me down if i ever gave them the chance

but now i’m dancing through the waves like a myth 
like a nymph, a naiad of the stories and songs elders sang 
i couldn’t tame the waters and all its wild 
i couldn’t tame the sea, in all its shimmering glory 
beneath the midday sun 
but that was okay, because it wouldn’t be half as beautiful 
if it bent its will to me

and it’s not hard to envision 
the rose colored corals that adorned my hair 
strands of beaded pearls hanging from my slender wrists 
as i weaved between the waves each time it crashed, 
and then receded again 
leaving only the imprints of my sea glass slippers on the honeyed sand

and in all honesty, i found it marvelous 
that the ocean waves were alive, that they could breathe
and i was alive too, more alive than i’d ever been
as i laughed and twirled and breathed along the rhythm of the sea
and in that moment, i was a fever dream

—Christina Li
**Last Night I Dreamed of Huntington Beach**

*after Rita Dove*

The sand was streaked black with oil. Dead crabs, birds, and fish were washed ashore, by the ever rising sea.

Bright yellow sunlight lined the clouds which poured blood rain.
The water looked like iodine, as if God was trying to

disinfect the Earth. Seashells were scattered everywhere creating a rainbow of stars,
only to be washed away, leaving an imprint in the sand.

Suddenly

the sun disappeared and moonlight colored my black body blue.

Lighting painted the sky and I heard the wind start chanting.
Clouds burst into flames, melting the sky like wax, I ran into the sea,
still rising—it consumed me. In the ocean’s blue darkness I could see everything:

Wailing mermaids bleeding oil and glowing seashells forming constellations,
dancing white coral grinning at me, and seven angelfish blowing trumpets,
whale carcasses singing with teeth made of plastic and eyes made from a thousand carpenter bees. The cacophony of their noises creating a symphony.

With a slack jaw, I listened to the ocean’s beautiful orchestra, and I swallowed water, plastic straws, shards of glass, and broken seagull wings.

—Dilinna Ugochukwu