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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 unobtrusively framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading experience and experiments with the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

The 2024 print issue plays with concepts of collaboration. For the first time in *Tab Journal*’s twelve years, the Creative Director has paired with another designer, Jessica Oddi, to create the visual language of this print issue. The bold visual backgrounds demonstrate a painterly process of two artists in the same space mark-making on one canvas together.

These visual elements become front and back partners of each poster–sheet–page. The conversations between this design and the poems themselves (text and voice) amplify the definition that this printed issue is at once a singular object and two interdependent parts, like a door hinge or a pair of pliers. One component cannot operate without the other. Pairs are categorized as twos or duos of parts, people, or ideas, but pairing carries the complexity of layers. The pairing of wine and cheese embodies two objects with their own distinct processes, standards for
quality, time for aging, textures, and experience of taste. In medicine, *theragnostic* refers to the pairing of diagnostic biomarkers with therapeutic agents to provide treatment matched to an individual. In a kinematic pair, each of two physical objects imposes constraints on the movement of the other. Pairing risks the mismatch, invites the unintended connection, and suggests what is left out by quantitative limits. The goal for this issue is partnership, conversation, celebration of the depth and complications of useful pairings.

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

**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.
Winner
Lorenzo Ripoll, Grade 1
*Leopard Shark*

Honorable Mention
Alexandra Chapman, Grade 1
*Monterey Bay*

Elliot Cheng, Kindergarten
*Crab*

Neya Seelan, Grade 1
*Paradise*
Leopard Shark by Lorenzo Ripoll

In the style of Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

Leopard shark,
Leopard shark,
Leopard shark,
What do you see?

I see a green kelp forest
looking at me.

Kelp forest,
Kelp forest,
Kelp forest,
What do you see?

I see orange fish eggs
looking at me.
Fish eggs,
Fish eggs,
What do you see?

I see a muddy habitat
looking at me.

Muddy habitat,
Muddy habitat,
Muddy habitat,
What do you see?

I see a spotted leopard shark
looking at me.
Monterey Bay by Alexandra Chapman

The Ocean is waving from its high point
And the King of the Ocean is a grand high point.
From the seagulls that fly high
To the fish that swim deep.
Oh, the Ocean is calling to me!

I smell the salty Bay air.
I gaze upon the small white clouds,
That sail in the sky.
The wind whispers in my ear
And I feel the wet sand on my toes.
Oh, to be a mermaid and splash away!
Crab by Elliot Cheng

Sharp Shimmering Sand
and Crabs
Beach
dangerous waves
that wash Things ashore
Wood
that wash to other beaches
and Spike your feet
Paradise by Neya Seelan

I had fun at California beach, and it can teach me a lot.
It is beautiful with birds and kites flying.
I see birds eating fish and fish live in the water.
The sun is pretty with bright colors, and it hides in the water when it sets in the evening.
It is paradise!
When I walk, I see rainbow-colored shells.
There is a kind of shell called Clams. They open and close their mouth.
The shells come from the water when the waves come to the sand.
I put them in the bucket and play.
The sand is soft like a pillow, and I made a big sandcastle.
The waves are big, and I like to surf in the waves.
Some things like wrappers, plastic bags, and straws harm sea animals.
We should protect California beaches by not throwing trash.
Winner
Ivan DeVries, Grade 3
*Friends by the Bay*

Honorable Mention
Dylan Bingham, Grade 3
*The Shores and Tide Pools of Hazards*

Olivia Fike, Grade 3
*Water Blue Flows*

Amorette Filemu, Grade 2
*Ocean Waves*

Julian Zatt, Grade 3
*Boogie Boarding*
**Friends by the Bay** by Ivan DeVries

Ada comes over, and we ask to play
Down by the beach at the mouth of the bay

In the back of the car, buckled into our seats
We take turns choosing some pretty slick beats

We both run right in, even though it is cold
A little bit scared, we make up our minds to be bold

Through fog, orange bridge cables climb and form peaks
Flocks of pelicans in V’s lead with their beaks

Floating on the water, enormous ships are filled
With colorful boxes stacked like the legos I build

The waves roll and break, and then we run
Our hearts beating fast from all of the fun

Surrounded by water, I look up to see
A shiny black sea lion riding the surf, just like me
We run to the sand, our wet skin cold as ice
My mom wraps us up and the warmness is nice

We wave goodbye to the bridge, the waves, and the sand,
Sad to be leaving, but happy hand in hand.
The Shores and Tide Pools of Hazards by Dylan Bingham

Flowing life everywhere
Waves washing treasures upon the shore
Sea spray in my face
Wind blowing through my hair
Waves crashing on the cliffs
Barnacles waving to the sky
Sea anemones sucking up food and tide, like a blackhole
A crab holds its pincers up ready to grab a passing snack
A starfish suctions onto a rock
An octopus slowly crawls over water-filled pools
Small fish dart back and forth between crevices in the rocks
A hermit crab makes his home in an empty shell
Flowing life everywhere
Water Blue Flows by Olivia Fike

Waves flow
As you go down low.
The sea smell is high.
You think it's divine.
The warm tea is hot.
Do you want a drop?
The sun is setting and the ocean shines. You feel its warmness and it’s beautifully fine. You are with me and I am with you. Together we can run into the ocean blues
Ocean Waves by Amorette Filemu

Ocean waves look like mountains
Going up and back down
Ocean waves are cold
Making me frown
Ocean waves sound like rocket ships
Blasting off
Ocean waves in my mouth
Making me cough
Boogie Boarding by Julian Zatt

Racing to the waves
Crystal clear waves taking me to shore
Paddling and kicking to speed up
Hopping over the waves
Sitting on my knees and sliding

Trying to catch huge waves
Riding on top of the crest
Saltwater splashing into my face
Sliding under the wave
Winner
Nya Wang-Jethi, Grade 5
*Anthozoa*

Honorable Mention
Adelyn Haskins, Grade 5
*Kelp*

Manting Liu, Grade 6
*World Beneath the Waves*

Siona Pedrocchi, Grade 6
*Whale Song*

Poppy Sargent, Grade 4
*Skies of the Bay*
Anthozoa by Nya Wang-Jethi

I am Fluorescent pink
Brilliant red
Vibrant blue

I have thousands of tentacles
Hundreds of spikes
Millions of branches

I am the brains
The bushes
The trees

I shelter the Spiny Lobster
I feed the Garibaldi
I nurture the Sunburst Anemone

I am the heart of the sea
I have been here
since the start of time

Once my beauty was told
I flourished and thrived

But then you came
And drank the life out of the sea

Hurt, defeated.
I still hang on
Knowing that someday I will be
Strong, big and powerful again
And when that day comes
You will have changed
**Kelp** by Adelyn Haskins

Elegant dancers leap, twirl, float, and pirouette through the water. They don't wear dazzling leotards or elegant skirts. These dancers are called kelp.

Forests stand tall and strong in the middle of the ocean. The trees don't have solid trunks or thick leaves. The trees are called kelp.

Children sway to the music of the pounding waves. These children aren't made of flesh and bone. These children are called kelp.

Flowers bloom under the protection of the ocean and light of the sun. These flowers don't have delicate petals and soft centers. These flowers are called kelp.

Candles bring light to the ocean and the world around them.
These candles aren’t made of dripping wax and flickering flame. Yet they still bring light to the world.

These candles are called kelp.
World Beneath the Waves by Manting Liu

White topped waves conceal
An underwater world
Garibaldi flashing in bright sun
And disperse into curtains of kelp unfurled
Schools of silverfish move as one
And slip through curtains of dull green kelp
Sharks and whales in shades of gray
Wait to feed on hidden prey
Bubbles rising reveal
An underwater world
No longer the ocean's to conceal
Whale Song by Siona Pedrocchi

All I saw was gray.
A burst of mist shot from the wavy water.

I heard a song,
a blue whale breached.
A big splash
It jumped. It leaped.

After the mother jumped soon came her daughter,
Then her whole pod.
The song of the sea,
It was beautiful,
The sound was so majestic,
Again there was a burst of water from the spout,
They leaped more,
And mist shooted from the spout
it hit my face,
The waves splashed up
The cool breeze as the boat went forward,
It was so nice

I looked at the water below and saw dolphins,
They swam fast,
They got in front of the boat
They jumped up high and the spout opened,
Then soon closed when they splashed in the water,
Soon we passed the pod,
Then my attention fell back on the whales,
The pod left but the child of the first whale stayed.
It leaped It jumped,
It gave me a beautiful show,
And I saw its beauty as the sun shined on her
Then soon the child left, and we headed back to shore.
Winner
Radhika Shah, Grade 9
lines in the sand

Honorable Mention
James Corman, Grade 9
The Great Blue Heron

Emma Quintero, Grade 9
i wish in saltwater billows
and gritty gold

Six Silva, Grade 8
There Aren't No Borders Here

Garrett Wong, Grade 9
Ode to the Sea
lines in the sand by Radhika Shah

i drew a line yesterday,
a line in the sand, one might say,
nothing these cold california waters can't take away
i promise, it's nothing that would stay

i knew the line would soon fray,
whispers of the sea breeze carrying it astray,
a fleeting promise, lost in the bay.
gone, these careless california waters will wash it away

those grains of time, the sand slips,
not even a little sticking to my fingertips,
the memory won't linger, even the line is now eclipsed,
swallowed by california water's swollen lips

the frantic waves know lost stories, broken oaths sworn,
in the leisurely tide, half-hearted promises carried and worn,
the lonely winds will sweep and mourn,
these accepting california waters, forever forlorn

these california waters, cool and bold,
armed with secrets, ancient and old.
let the mistakes, the imperfections in your line fade,
let them be lost in the dance, by the breeze betrayed,

let grains of time slip through fingers light,
harsh memories won’t linger, they take their flight.
in california waters carrying your plight,
let the broken line fade into the tumultuous night

let each rising tide pull you into a trance,
to draw a new line, take another chance,
the current will carry your burden in a fleeting dance,
these california waters, seemingly fickle but so steadfast,
if you'd just draw another line, let it waltz and weave,
on the shoreline where dreams and realities cleave.
in the embrace of these california waters, you'll believe,
your long-forgotten wishes, the waters retrieve

stay with our california waters, please don't go
dip your toes in the water, watch the moonlight flicker and glow,
on our knowing california waters, take life beautiful and slow,
a fresh page, a blank slate, let’s start anew.
The Great Blue Heron by James Corman

Rising above a curtain of estuary reeds
like steam from a pot
the heron
a marionette.

Too tall to fly
you'd think
but the heron defies
as it glides through San Pedro winds
and blazing heat
chopstick legs and lizards' feet
the heron defies
as it flies.

Watercolor feathers
beak like a sword
the heron pierces skies
and scales
Standing proud above cattails.

Wings open
a feathered kite
out of a Dalí
Calm.
Careful.
River Royalty.

A silent bird

neck a ribbon
fierce precision

A silent bird
Whose sight is music.
i wish in saltwater billows and gritty gold by Emma Quintero

o, my own and only! in your extremities, i find solace and salvation
in your tide pools teeming with maroon, pulsating anemone, and as their
breaths collide and mix with mine, our reciprocation falls along with
hiding soundly under rocks and awaiting confrontation by those above.

i am whole in your reefing coral spine, in your spiked shark's jaw,
in sucking delicate starfishes lining my fingers and forearms.
i am whole in your sea glass turquoise irises, in your seaweed soul,
in your blue whale veins, immense enough to contain my cosmic bliss.

o, my own and only! i watch as your endless expanses extend
beyond my singular knowledge, and perhaps this excites me, as your
presence will remain sound and unscathed as my kin walk upon
this muddy earth, to wet and dry their calloused feet by your doorstep.

i am unabridged, i am complete, i am everything in dolphin's whine,
in their baby blue seahorse gallops, in its angler fish's glow,
and in every ebb and flow in my jellyfish's uncalloused fingers, 
i am whole, i am everything, everywhere and depleted and mine.

yet soon, i am twelve once more, with opalescent braces and book in hand, 
while tortured in thick, oily anxieties, now conciliated by delicate crashes, 
warm, life-giving sand, holding grease-coated tongues, i am healed in 
your watery billows that crash and call my name into expanses deep and far.

and as i wash briny braids in the sink and slither, body lotion, 
into baby blue hello kitty pajamas, i will wish upon wish upon 
that in our vast, blue-misted morning, i shall find myself again 
underneath aquamarine tides, my own and only kingdom.
There Aren't No Borders Here by Six Silva

There aren't no borders here
    If you find yourself among the waves, a break
     —breathe
    Away from the hazy
    Day-by-day working life
    Where you travel [mindless], eyes glazed
    Go to the waves.
    Let the hiss of sand sing you
awake softly, sweetly

    Open your soul to the cerulean lullaby
crustaceans scuttle through sand
among miles of stretching, distant land
    take a hand and
    cup it

    dip your fingers into the cool
deep chasm
of an ever-lapping love
lose that long-lost feeling

Who knew home could be this deep?
—breathe
Let the salty mist fill your lungs
The earth's lover
Aphrodite's mother
guide you

waves whisper, hiss, slide
"Child, there aren't no borders here"
And wash away your tears gently stitch back the tears
The world is always taking
Pulling, yearning, for separation

But here on this beach
Listen to her gentle speech
there isn't an unraveling, just
the place where sea and land meet

Ocean, vast, ever expansive
Comforting, loving embrace
There aren't no borders here
Ode to the Sea by Garrett Wong

The sea is free
Never predicted, never controlled.
It can eat cities,
But it chooses to brush the shore.

Its cold grasp when I reach out.
A grasp that softens
The cracked, white lines along my knuckles.

The salt water stings
The ripped blisters,
And it soothes
The old scars.

The sea stares at me.
It's a dark gaze that reflects
A part of me
I'd rather forget.
The sea is sweet
Compared to the
Salty red
From all the wasted breaths.
Winner
Emilie Vu-Nguyen, Grade 12
Two Heartbeats

Honorable Mention
Bianca Robak, Grade 12
Far and Below

Claire Scanlan, Grade 11
Orchestra of Chaos

Krystal Taylor, Grade 11
The Beauty in the Beach

Mattea Zurielle D. Menjares, Grade 12
Currents
Two Heartbeats by Emilie Vu-Nguyen

Salt remnants, like lip scrub under my nose
Feet submerged, toes curled and splayed
Silky sand between my fingers
A pinky promise between the Wind and Sea
   "I'll come back if you stay here for me."

Floating to merge with Sea's frozen heart
Seaweed creeps up along my arms
The fish cower, afraid of human song
Bask here with me, under light we breathe
Sea, my abode

I dwell like hermits, cracked shell and free
Sway like jelly, floating along your body
Lay like seashells, discarded and asleep
I am not unlike you, Sea
A broken heart just like you, see?
You are safe here with me
Far and Below by Bianca Robak

Elusive squid in the murky abyss
Share your secrets with curious ears
Still you glow like a newborn star
Dotting the eternal night below

Ink escapes your rosy frame
Fleeing the scene, to vaguely be seen
Thousands of children asleep in your arms
Unaware of the barren deep

I dream of you beyond the sand
Waiting for me, waiting for us
Hypnotic movements ensnare me so
Beckoning me to the place I call home
Orchestra of Chaos by Claire Scanlan

The shallow strings of grass bend in the song of the wind
The reeds of love concave at the bough of the canoe
The swish of fins echo in the ears of kelp
The murex slips, breathing sharp, catches only from a hair
Life cries to the orchestra
Life cries in secret desperation through the storm
Lighting the sky with danger
Tremendous mountains crash along the shore
Life bleeds but feels no pain
Light comes to, the bark of the crowd arises
The cry of a child, the cry of the old
All Tears taste the same
The Beauty in the Beach by Krystal Taylor

Upon the shore where waves embrace the land,
A realm of dreams, where grains of golden sand.
The ocean's canvas, vast and azure-blue,
Where seagulls dance and skies reflect their hue.

The sun, a blazing orb of radiant fire,
Paints streaks of crimson in the evening's mire.
As daylight wanes, the stars begin to gleam,
A cosmic dance, a mesmerizing dream.

The gentle tide, a lullaby's sweet rhyme,
Caresses shores with each rhythmic chime.
It whispers secrets to the shells and stones,
In undertones of ancient ocean's moans.

Beneath the surface, life in vibrant bloom,
Corals like gardens, casting off their plume.
Neon fish in schools, a vibrant display,
In this aquatic world, they find their way.

Footprints in the sand, a fleeting trace,
As time and tide in endless waltz embrace.
A memory etched in grains, soon to fade,
But the beach's beauty will never trade.

So, walk this shore, where dreams and reality meet,
Where the beach's beauty is both wild and sweet.
With every wave, a story it will teach,
In nature's grandeur, the timeless beach.
Currents by Mattea Zurielle D. Menjares

In reference to "Love Letter from the Sea to the Shore" by Delaney Bailey

Life remains ever changing, but I know
I could count on you.
Your iridescent waves remain stagnant,
when I need you most
and I continually come back to you
for a breath of fresh, coastal air;
just as you return to me at the shore.
No matter how far I drift away
Hermosa
Manhattan
and Redondo's
Pacific currents will always pull me back in.
Into the place of my youth
where I scavenged for shells to hear distant sounds;
crafted kingdoms of sand, which I once ruled.