

ilkley literature festival

Be All Write

#ILFWritingChallenge

Prompt: Write a poem about the sea.

The Song of the Kraken

This is me
The daughter of the sea
Bathing amongst the trees
Reaching for the open crease
My legs buried deep below
That earthy crust of over-tow
It's not wrong but it's not right
This aquamarine moulting serpentine

This is me
This is I,
this Kraken underneath
swimming through the seas of time
Setting roots where fins once were
My gills all sandy, I'm growing fur
The precious scales are falling foul
of the forest people's respectful bows

This is me
I am the sea
Waving my way in-land
Riding the sea fog from coast to coast
Searching for that perfect repose
There is no distance
There is no time
Just this perfectly moulted serpentine

- Sussi Smith



Saltburn in August

Twenty months ago I last saw the sea,
and it was here, on the last day of the year.
It's many more months since I saw it in summer,
I can't remember where.

Today there are sunbathers, surfers and donkeys,
the chalets are full. It always seems
to be sunny here, though today
you can just make out the turbines

at Redcar; Hartlepool's lighthouse is hidden.
I don't regret coming back inland
through the Italian Gardens, missing out the town,
but I do wish now I had walked on the sand.

- Peter Donnelly