

**e a t**

*inspired by 'The Sharks' c.2001 and 'Shark Bay' 2002 by Reuben Ernest Brown  
this work was written on unceded Dharawal and Yuin Country*

every morning I swallow an ocean  
sling it back, like a shot  
feel its fathomless leagues fill all that empty dark  
and settle, silt and all, in my stomach  
grief cannot consume me if I consume it first

(and yet)

between the river and the sea is a body  
of water  
it is not mine, but it is home  
or, perhaps  
it is mine, but it is not home  
what is a body if not a vessel bearing bloodlines  
I can never pour out

I swallow another ocean  
another  
(another)  
overflowing  
and yet  
(and yet)  
there is always room for more

in the beginning  
the sky only just blooming  
I am  
the precipice of an idea, the promise of family  
an altar to memory and possibility  
mostly teeth, at first  
a singing kaleidoscope shifting, slipping  
between fingers trying  
to hold on

(grief is learned and

born

grows so easily

into a heart

when watered

by blood)

my mother learns

she cannot take me near any body of water without spare clothes

*you run*, she says

*you never look back*

and I promise her *I won't this time, I promise I won't, I promise* and  
after,

when she pulls me from the belly of the sea into her arms once more  
clothes more salt than cotton

she is too kind to say my promises are shells  
easily broken

lost to the tides

scattered on the shore

now,

I am

a song on repeat

a timelapse of everything I've ever lost

a memorial to memory and possibility

what is a body if not another grief to carry

(if I keep swallowing oceans

if I let go

no one will see all the sadness

all of me

spilling spilling spilling

into an echo)

we visit the beach in winter

buried in big, black coats

and pretend not to notice the silence

the wind should be loud

the sea should be loud

and yet

(and yet)

against the backdrop of frosted waves and mist, I take a polaroid of him

and ask him to take one of me

when lined up they show all we cannot say

I look at him, waiting  
and he looks away

a silly habit, I suppose  
to still wish  
out of a man  
a father to appear

on the way to another mouthful  
I wander the shoreline  
pick my way through the bones and bluebottles  
settled in their repose but  
still breathing  
the waves carve lines in the sand with every break  
they look like scars  
they look like my name

*aren't you done yet*, they say, as I run  
headlong into the sea, *aren't you tired?*  
and I try to say *yes! yes!*  
but my head is already under  
jaw unhinged and locked around another wave  
swallowing swallowing swallowing

grief cannot break on the shore  
carve scars and names  
if I break it first

(and yet)

and yet  
the water rushes up my throat  
a song I have always known  
*look at all this blood I cannot hold*, I say,  
*see it and then look away*

between  
an idea and an echo  
letting go and holding on  
an ocean and an ocean  
a body

swallow another grief; *you are what you—*