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## Quakes Beneath the Sea

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# Quakes Beneath the Sea

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*Mary Dengler*

When older brothers tell us they are sick  
To death, they seem young again, as if  
*They* are the younger now. We would,  
If we could, remove their pain or fight  
Whatever takes them—be their hero,  
Forestall night.

Unlike the little girl triumphant in his found-out  
Window-smashing rumble  
Behind church, I rage that he is caught.  
Unlike the treacherous youth's betrayal  
Of his drinking bouts and envious of his stuff,  
I'd give him all I own.  
His sins seem justified, his errors mild,  
The silly actions of a childhood saint. No doubt  
God must feel the same.

He pinched my arms and almost drowned me in the lake  
But fought the red-haired heavy taunting boy.  
He mocked my early loves  
But let me ride majestically with him to school.  
He even let me double date  
And showed me moonlight moves too soon.  
But when he handed me the keys to his green car  
And left me for a northern school,  
He cut my faithful heart.

I bled when he left God  
The way his faithless wife left him.  
I felt the rift.

The rift evoked a quake—hidden  
As he sailed his lawless boat—  
Then swelled a current  
Running up and all along

His unprotected coast,  
Invading far in-land til,  
Smashing home and boat to bits,  
It left his All exposed to ruin, Mystery  
Too dark for even him.  
Like all disasters, this one  
Heralded dis-ease.  
Retired and ill, he's forced to excavate  
The sources of his rift, his quake,  
An aging infant with a broken will,  
Courageous to a fault,  
A haggard face, a stalwart, halfway homeward heart.

In daily words, I try to keep us  
With the current,  
All the plates in place,  
But now, like him, I feel the ground shift  
Every time we talk.