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Fresh Harbor

Mary Dengler
Dordt College, mary.dengler@dordt.edu

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Mary Dengler

The harbor, Dana Point, assailed
then drew me toward its dazzling whites
and blues, its sparkling greens,
as fresh as summer laundry drying in the wind
or still-boxed crayons to a child who dreams
of drawing sunlit islands girdled by the sea
and overhung with forests wild inhabited
by unknown folk.

A chop of shooting lights,
and whites of countless gunwales
drew me toward the water-walks,
away from morning latte crowds
who’d settled under green umbrellas
under sun-lit clouds,
a mastiff or a brace of poodles at their feet,
a baby stroller at their side,
a child with dripping ice-cream
chasing screaming gulls and pigeons
out of reach.

The rustling whites and wedge-wood blues
of sails folded, knotted
on the sparkling decks
reclaimed the latent child,
enfolded, boxed, and knotted deep inside,
and drew her toward Ulyssean seas,
her gray hair curling in salt spray.

Refreshed, she walked past
Lotus-eaters, Lastrygonians, Cyclops,
Sirens, Circe, and false gods,
then circled back with haste
toward home and new horizons
just beyond her grasp.

The restless harbor, fresh
with winds and straining boats, inclines
prophetic hearts more than a distant sail—
still holds the drawing of an hour
with fresh impossible designs.