like waves (push and pull)

by penrosely

Summary

Annie wants to go home, to the ocean and the waves.

Notes

I was basically beating myself up for not being able to write so I tried something completely different. Also I’ve been reading a lot of Hunger Games stuff recently.

She remembers that she gave in.

She remembers looking up, up at a dead gray sky spread over with clouds and thinking it looks like rain, better swim to shore, maybe we'll have salmon for dinner.

She remembers that she tilted back, floated and churned like a mangled rag doll over gray water (tossed away by a bored child) and she tried to apologize, tried to say i'm sorry, but her lungs filled with the ocean and no one replied.

(She remembers one of Scylla's toothy mouths reaching down, plucking her up to devour like so many other lost men of the sea.)

Finnick cries when he sees her.
She wants to say *stop, don’t be sad, it's alright.* But she can't, because the people with the colorful hair and sharp tools put something over her mouth to stop her from biting. It's not her fault she was biting. It was self defense, why can’t they understand that?

Finnick looks beautiful, perfect as always, golden skin and bronze hair and cheekbones like a marble statue. Mags liked to joke that he's prettier than any girl, and Annie remembers laughing at that.

She can’t remember the last time she laughed, but she can't find anything funny. And there's something over her mouth to stop her from biting.

They’ve tied down her hands and feet, the people with the colorful hair and the knives. She wouldn't stop hitting, they say, and if they would just let her talk she would say that's not true, she was swimming. (She knows she’ll drown if she stops.)

Finnick just cries, and his tears are slow and rolling and sorrowful (like waves).

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Caesar smiles at her, so she smiles back.

She notices the lights, sees the people with colorful hair that are probably hiding their knives and waiting to strike.

Caesar asks her a lot of questions. She tries to answer them, but most of the time she doesn't have answers so she just stays quiet. She notices Finnick and Mags in the front row, standing out in the crowd of extravagance and false smiles, and she waves. Mags waves back, but Finnick looks sad.

Caesar says, *my dear, i just love your dress. reminds me of waves.*

Annie starts crying. Caesar apologizes, thinks he's done something wrong, but no. She wants to show him. Yes, her dress is blue and green and gray and shimmery twinkly and yes, it's exactly like waves, just the way her tears are. She's just trying to show him.

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Finnick takes her home.

He wraps his arms around her (enveloping, sheltering and caging) and whispers, voice weak, *let's go home, annie.*

She kisses him and tastes salt and salmon and shattered seashells (waves) and follows.

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The ocean looks different.

The ocean is home, the ocean is her life and childhood and death and salvation and dream, and it should welcome her, shouldn't it? It should be beckoning, pulling back and forth to invite her, and she should run toward the tide. But it looks angry, more black and gray and slaps than green and blue and foam and the the sky looks like rain.

She takes her shoes off. Her toes wiggle in the sand and she leaves a curved path (the dotted line on a treasure map) as she walks down the beach. Broken seashells poke her but she doesn't mind. The wind is strong, slapping her hair against her face and drying the tears on her cheeks. (She
hadn’t realized they were there, but they’re gone now so what does it matter?)

The waves are pounding, they’re tall and looming and they crash in sprays of foam and she says, *hello, i’m home, did you miss me?*, and the icy water makes her feet hurt but she doesn’t mind even if her knees shake.

Finnick pulls her back and she tries to say *no, dear, my love, it’s alright. can’t you see the ocean has missed me? can’t you hear the sirens calling? listen to their song. they’re hungry for blood and fresh souls and i must return home.* But words betray her as they so often do and she asks about the salmon.

(She tells Finnick she wants to swim and he says no.)

Annie dreams of waves.

They push her, pull her, nudge and prod and whisper *give up.* The water spreads her hair (blood diluting), snatches her ankles. *go to sleep. forget. come home.*

*no.* She kicks and paddles, instinct born of years spent jumping off bobbing rowboats, searching for clams and seashells and collecting sand dollars and seaglass and chasing off gulls. *no.* But she can’t think of a reason and the truth is she’s tired, she’s tired of tears and and questions and hiding and she wants to go home.

She wakes up short of breath, covers twisted around her (tentacles probing, Charybdis taking a breath) and a mournful aching in her chest (a flood of crashing water roiling and trying to destroy what it doesn’t understand, because she doesn’t understand even though she tries, she *tries*) and she sits and she has nowhere to go because really, *where is home?* and she cries (like waves).

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