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Blue-Black Shell, Blue Feather

Marvin Solomon

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Blue-Black Shell, Blue Feather

Blue of the sea and blue of the sky
Meet on this horizon measured by our breath;
Then merge in depth
Of our leisured eye,

Plumb fathoms of air wreathing our
Foreheads like tides of hair, settle to suck
Of deeps where the flounder mark
Of our vestigial feet stirs

With seep. This shingle and feather, this reef
And leaf—air-plucked, sea-struck discard
Of bivalve and bird—
I strike here out of time’s swift

Swim, side by side, preened from will to shut
Or fly. Disuse of blue jay dropped
This feather: tides snapped
And sprung the intaglioed locket

Of the clam. Finding them, found us in blue gardens
On blue shores, banked in heightened shrubberies
Of words, alone at the sea’s
Last azure stroll. We can

Outfly the jay with this feather, and smuggle a hearthside
Snugger than the clam; because the clam flies such cobalts
Of flag, and the jay shoals
In such pure tide, he’s dyed

With the strand of it. We have the gain of loss:
The sky drops, gulled of one blue gill;
The sea soars, one quill
Of its gorgeous plumage less.

—Marvin Solomon