

# Fairy Tale with Laryngitis and Resignation Letter

By Jehanne Dubrow

You remember the mermaid makes a deal,  
her tongue evicted from her throat,  
and moving is a knife-cut with every step.  
This is what escape from water means.  
Dear Colleagues, you write, for weeks  
I've been typing this letter in the bright  
kingdom of my imagination. Your body  
is a ship of pain. Pleasure is when you climb  
the rocks and watch the moonlight  
touching everywhere you want to go,  
a silver world called faraway. Dear Colleagues,  
you write, this place is a few sentences  
contained by the cursor's rippling barrier—  
what happened here is only beaks  
and brackets, the serif's liquid stroke.  
The old story has witches, a prince in love  
with the surging silence of women,  
a knife that turns the water red. You write,  
Dear Colleagues, now these years are filed  
in the infinite oceans of bureaucracy.  
Everything bleaches or fades. In other words,  
goodbye. Sometimes it's possible to walk,  
although you've been told inside the oyster  
shell of your heart there is no soul.  
Creatures like you must end as a spray of salt,  
green droplets floating breathless in the air.

Source: *Poetry* (January 2020)