

Of Molluscs

By May Sarton

As the tide rises, the closed mollusc
Opens a fraction to the ocean's food,
Bathed in its riches. Do not ask
What force would do, or if force could.

A knife is of no use against a fortress.
You might break it to pieces as gulls do.
No, only the rising tide and its slow progress
Opens the shell. Lovers, I tell you true.

You who have held yourselves closed hard
Against warm sun and wind, shelled up in fears
And hostile to a touch or tender word—
The ocean rises, salt as unshed tears.

Now you are floated on this gentle flood
That cannot force or be forced, welcome food
Salt as your tears, the rich ocean's blood,
Eat, rest, be nourished on the tide of love.

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