

**THE
SEA IS
SPREAD
AND
CLEAVED
AND
FURLED**

(Introduction)

THALASSA CANNOT LOSE HER GLITTER, CANNOT LOSE
Vahni Capildeo

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld

William Cowper, 'The Castaway'

To prepare this response, I dip-dyed paper blue. I distressed it with a carrot grater. I let it dry on a mirror laid in the sun on top of a shiny car. The dip-dyed blue, distressed, dried-out paper was laid on a blank sheet of paper that had not been expecting it but was chilling there anyway, out of the sun. Looking at the holes cresting along the paper. Falling into the sea through the wet-look portal. Burning head, an acid yellow dandelion in coconut gel. Opening mouth, nailpolish remover air. A woman in cat-ears crying marshmallow tears and out of shot the armed guards patrolling ranks of deckchairs. Private beach, unoccupied beach. Private beach, occupied beach. Over and over, now. Into the sea, into the book, into the film, into the mirror. What HAPPENED. Cat got the response.

begin with the blues a lolly pale fire
something was carried over the sea are you
my plant spies are always with us ruining
the economy are you my source were you lecarréd away
or did you cockataileer a boat to the source of bananagirl
fellatio is a noun on ne donne pas in French on fait
banana like barbeque like acceleration like extravaganza like disaster
cats are mxtaken for commentators cats are mxfed
people loneliness cats are mxdated as temple-dwellers
cats uneconomically recall purity&danger truthfully as an ice-cream flavour
lickable for likable wordplay did that befur do it again lickable fur
cats are mxlicked they don't go there for something horrible
only fur something alive alive a live a laser pointer
can look like look lick life cut away what love

1a

Are you happy, she asks. i'm happier, i say, and then: if you had to be an animal, which animal would you be.

She cannot fit her mouth around the English for the animal she means. Have you ever been happy, she asks.

She means a swan. She likes the way it wraps the long elegance of its neck around its lover until, like, forever.

i don't think i've ever been happy, i say. And then: if i had to be an animal, i'd be a zebra.

A zebra is just a horse with stripes, i say. i can tell she was hoping for something more profound.

I was hoping for something more profound, she says. In front of us, two cats are rolling on what used to be the grass.

The cats are rolling in the heat. Beyond, the ground gives to cliffs, it gives to the Tyrrhenian sea.

I think too much, she says, it's one of my problems. Let's play a game, i say. My skin itches on raw heat.

What type of game, she says. Let's make a list of all our problems, i say. You go first, she says.

We drink meloncello for breakfast. i make a silent list of my problems. i am thinking which ones would sound

like bare sincerity, i say. i'm thinking which would sound, like, super vulnerable. i'm thinking which would sound

sincere, but also like, *oh, that's super cute.*

You're a good me, i say. That dude with the gut behind the counter, he's a bad me, i say. She's snoring gently.

She's a good me snoring with elegance. The man with the gut brings coffee. Cardi B is a good me, i say.

Leonard Cohen is a good me, although he's dead, obviously. Michel Foucault is a bald me.

Foucault is a bald me that looks like Doc Brown. Michael J Fox is a metaphor for my own inevitable decline,

in the sense that another's misfortune is, actually, always about me.





**PROTO
TYPE
PUBLISH
ING
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TSIS**

The sea is spread and cleaved and furled is conceived as a single work operating across poetic language and moving-image. You can access the film here:

END



ISBN 978-1-9160520-9-3

The experience of Ahren Warner's new book is part invitation and part secrecy. As I read it I felt I had wandered from a party and stumbled into something vulnerable, something human and real beyond the clinking of glasses and fake laughter. That I had gotten the chance to hide in a closet and listen to a conversation I needed to hear but couldn't quite access on my own. There is a conversation between the text and the film, a conversation between the speaker and the other, and most importantly – a conversation between Mr. Warner and himself. What a strange joy to be invited in.

Matthew Dickman

Ahren Warner has a claim to be the 'poet's poet' of his generation. Even in apparently domestic and personal guise, he's a writer whose work conveys voluptuous but intelligent delight in language and technique.

The Guardian

Theatrical, toxic and oddly gorgeous... Warner moves from playful social observation, through reflections on memory and artifice, to a near-Baudelairean spleen, his games with language and ideas as serious in their investigations of the given world as any philosophy.

John Burnside