



In Every Wave

Charles Quimper

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Piercing and compact, Charles Quimper's novella *In Every Wave* follows a grief-consumed father through a vortex of regret and fragmented fantasies. Here, sorrow is an ocean, and lost possibilities lurk behind every swell.

Spectral images direct the father's narration: of amber sand and pale sunbathers, of animate worlds beneath the sea where water creatures mingle with lost children, of a forest whose high branches filter out a due sense of danger. The father lost his daughter, Beatrice, near the water—the ocean? a lake? a river flowing out to sea?—on a previously inward glow of a day, and has been straining for hints of her since. He takes to the ocean on a vessel alone, searching for Beatrice, who is now spread among atoms, moonstones, memories, and flashes, and who waits to be joined.

As the father scrapes salt from the side of his boat to flavor his dinners and tends to endless cuts on his hands, directing his vessel toward a certain maelstrom, it becomes unclear what is real and what is not. His metaphors reach for the familiar, if they sometimes come out splintered, as though his pain is a prism that has fractured the spectrum of what's true.

Observations are collected in log book fashion for Beatrice, whom he's sure he'll encounter: "At the helm in a sea tinted purple like wine," he gestures at her. "Total silence. No stars except a tiny pulsar twinkling in the great dome of the sky." Every phrase is a foghorn, and every utterance rasps.

Almost too tender to touch, Quimper's book is both an intimate and a solitary act. Approachable in its aching but lovely turns of phrase, but a harrowing prospect for those navigating their own losses, *In Every Wave* is a both vast and succinct encapsulation of grieving.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (November/December 2018)

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