

HELEN MOORE

Migration story

Outbound her belly gnawed for hundreds of miles northward,
(food sources **e l u s i v e** with Atlantic **w a r m i n g**).

Now from Arctic waters she-Fish comes skirting our coastline,
a silver torpedo
fattened on Capelin & eight-tentacled Squid.

Attuned via iron in her head to Earth's geomagnetic compass —
hen Salmon surfs in-Channel currents,
Lizard Point,
Start Point,
Portland Bill, where North Sea cools Gulf Stream.

Over bedrock, boulders she's as Bird flying
above Sea Squirts, Hornwrack, bright Anemones
& Sponges. Ledges where Leopard Spotted Goby,
Tompot Blenny, Cuckoo Wrasse lurk.

Anadromous nomad — Salmon of shimmering selvedge
of ice shelf; daughter of Sedna, Inuit goddess,
creatix of Seal, Polar Bear.

And Salmon of birthplace in backwater Dorset chalk:
Sydling Water, which suckles the Frome.
She who was egg, fry, parr, smolt,
returning against all odds.

She-Fish, who's dodged nets of **offshore factories**, which rob
ancient paths of Salmon migration. Survivor
of Sea Lice, bloodsuckers from fish farms,
p l a g u i n g her strength.

Warrioress, who's evaded every predator powers now
with her thousand-fold cargo of roe
below Durlston Head; darts through Swanage Bay,

where *Fleur de Lys* timbers shiver;

slips round Old Harry Rocks, the circumnavigation of which
nineteenth-century **s h i p s** made with Newfoundland
cod; & from the Americas, tar, indigo, rice,
mahogany, pitch. In Studland Bay, she glides
over rippling Eelgrass in which Seahorse, Pipefish hide.

Here, natal river's hints – scents of genetic nursery
 coursing through Swash Channel, where *Fame of Hoorn*
spooked ancestor kin – that wide-eyed, wooden merman

 haunting the wreck. But centuries of burial
is a fraction of salmonid lineage – generations that weathered ice ages;
 have felt Poole Bay s p r e a d, shrink, s p r e a d,
 & the restless legs of its spits.

As twin sentries they guard the entrance –
 hold the chain ferry like Magwitch
clanking to & fro across this watery cell.

At this spot where river scent grows potent, Salmon responds,
starts to transition from pelagic to freshwater creature,
 skin blushing with the need to breed.

Soon she-Fish will creep beneath **speedboats**, yachts,
 nose between Fursey & Brownsea,
 nudge towards Hamworthy,
where black-clad windsurfers back-loop, gybe.

Senses alert, white muscles quivering,
 of laying her eggs Salmon will be dreaming of riffles,
 where stream rushes over gravel.

 And her ache for kype-jawed males
will spur her river-run to spawn.

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