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## Fallen Behind A Head

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night swimming on John's Island  
fallen below another crest  
he watches from the resting trough  
as unsheathed silver furls forward  
spurred on by leagues of fallen generals  
the unforgiving eyes of the deep  
raised arms and the fore hooves of the saddled  
wild horsehair and the whites of many eyes  
ahead the black beach waits glistening  
slick as whale skin  
the collapse on the silence in the eye  
overwhelming itself as if to final calm  
but the shore will not be broken  
so each retreats back behind the curtains of  
the deep as if there were safety there or need  
the bleached white rocks jut from the shallows  
like the heads of salt blind ancient mariners  
awaiting the mercy of moontide

swimming in these waters he feels as he did then  
that there is no loss here but that there is no loss  
over there he could see the stained purple sand  
draw them in in a premature burial  
seeping back to the one womb  
red drawn back by the blue shift and he was sure  
he was unsure of what he shouldered  
but dying always and anyways  
in a blood clouded marsh  
he waited with lifeless stars and shells  
till dawn cracked and he woke to the great fans  
sounding in the sky and the bare feet  
if only a tide would come now to raise this memory  
to lift it away as another draped body  
spread it to a thin film be  
little it to just a shell in his shoe  
he would shake it out so for once he could join  
in the swelling

– Richard Croft '93