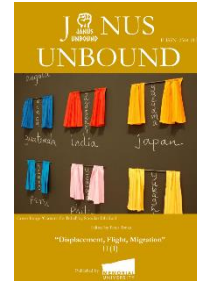


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## DITW

—after Adrienne Rich

We read the book of myths and have the selfies to prove it:  
Wearing healed scars from lacerated arms.  
The armour we donned as we trekked down into the deep, flawed now, yet it  
                  clings to  
skin like Sins of the father  
We did this on our own  
No Jacques and Co.  
Me, myself, and I  
Alone.

There was no ladder, no schooner,  
There was no instrument of direction  
There was no sign, but the water gleamed with a divine invitation  
My ancestors at the bottom calling for a reunion  
Going overboard needs no introduction  
Our feet followed the voice of home and in we  
Dove

Deeper my body fell  
The light from the surface touching ghosts underneath  
Figments of versions of what the deep would be  
Vanish  
My human flesh couldn't withstand the pressure  
Consciousness and lucidity getting lesser  
The sea refuted my form  
The sea demanded I be reborn

Ventilated and breathing  
My legs were no more  
Arms turned to fins  
Lungs to Gills,  
My skeleton mirrored twin fish in the sky  
Who knew why we came down here?  
Was it to be renewed or to be free  
Or both

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It took a minute or three to get comfortable in your new skin,  
You (we) could swim now but, where to?  
The book of myths was only that, myths!  
Getting acquainted with new milieu  
Requires use of new information

This was always the place.  
Beneath the eager glaring eyes from above  
Far from patriarchal penetrative probes  
Chanced with James Cameron kinda leisure  
Roving and searching, a deluge of truth beginning to appear

And even then: it was easy to forget  
why we ended up married to the seafloor  
among the many who called the caliginous blue home  
And just 'cause you're one a dem'  
Doesn't mean there are no sharks circlin'

The thing I came for  
was never clear from the start  
Smeared fragments of heart  
I, me, her, him  
Us  
Me,  
Navigated spaces that our bodies couldn't breathe (nor our eyes could see)

We were the resurrected abomination of the deep  
And courage sometimes was born of necessity  
We who found a way  
Map out the scene back to our authentic aquatic selves  
We left the fictitious tales on the seafloor  
Emerging with a blade, wearing sleek, rugged amphibious (skin) terrain

### **Biography**

Tanatswa Mushonga is an emerging performance artist and poet from Zimbabwe. He spent three years in school in Jamaica and also calls the Bahamas home. He has been a performer of poetry since grade school and is working on an EP in hip hop genres.