On Walking

The skate rarely sees its shadow
but instead observes the soundless drift
and glimmering silhouettes of others overhead.

For protection, the skate wears two eye spots
ringed like the cross section of tree stumps.
Its back, the faded brown of potato skins and old wall paper,
befits such a cautious animal who spends its life
denying the existence of a third dimension.

But the skate is not perfectly flat.
Its body, sloping gently out of the sand,
peaking at the ridge of the spine,
forms an arch much like that of your foot.
Both anatomies, buttressed by bone and tendon,
have the patient elegance of a suspension bridge.

I’d like to imagine skates as lonely feet
wandering an empty ocean. A pair
matching each other stride for stride,
stirring up sediment with each step.

Their soles worn smooth by sand, the skates march
through the calm stratums of the sea
where a fog of plankton hangs bloodless
and ghostlike in green shafts of sunlight
down into the frigid depths of the ocean--
the anonymous and mute pockets of the world
that they so desire.

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