



a solo LARP to be played near and in the water,
by Jeeyon Shim

CIRCLE ONE

Are you:

A mermaid

A selkie

A siren

[Standing before it now, feeling the damp
crumble of the sand beneath your bare
feet, something inside you keens with
terrible longing.]

What do you yearn for?

ON THE SHORE, AT NIGHT

[The sea used to be your bower and
garden, your hearth and home; no longer,
not for a long time.]

How did you lose your place in the tide?

[You sacrificed everything for them.]
Who did you cleave yourself in two for?

[In your hands you cradle something:]

Your skin

Your voice

Your lover, what is left of them

[It's time. You have to release it. You have to.]

When do you throw your cargo into the water?

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[Physical therapy extended further and further out the more you broke down, until finally it led you here.]

[The pool is a hollow simulacrum of the vast expanse you used to roam, but the buoyancy you feel in the water comforts you.]

[Tendon and muscle twinge in response
the new ways you gently work them. It is
not the same as when you streaked, sleek
and powerful, through the sea; but right
now it is enough.]

[You think about the humans you've seen, from below, serenely floating on their backs. You wonder what that feels like.]

[Let your feet leave the concrete floor. Lie back, gently and wide. Feel your ribcage swell and sink with the air you breathe.]

[Let your feet find purchase on the concrete floor. Hold your hands out in front of you, cupping them as though you are supporting something very, very precious to you.]

[illegible]

EPILOGUE: IMMERSED IN A BATHTUB WITH FRESH, HOT WATER AND EPSOM SALT

The water should be very warm -- not hot, but comfortable to the touch. Add the Epsom salt while the water is running to help it dissolve.

For a standard-sized tub, use the amount suggested on the package, usually 1 to 2 cups, or the amount recommended by your doctor."

[In this frank mammalian body you find yourself craving warmth in a way that your kin would find compromising. You've come to enjoy it. The bathwater covers you like a thick, heavy blanket.]

How did seasons pass in the sea you come from? What did it feel like as the world cooled and warmed around you?

[The sea did not constrain you. Its vistas are limitless and you traversed them without a thought for the meaning of confinement. Everything on land is a plate or a cup or a bowl; a cage, you used to think, but you've learned to know the difference between a prison and a vessel. You feel the walls of the tub around your body. They comfort you.]

How does the bath water feel as you feel it soak into your skin?

[You add salt to all your baths. Your physical therapist says it helps with muscle tension. You like it because sometimes you hold your breath and sink under the surface, and the sting of the briny water at your lash line reminds you of home. Your home before where you will always live in the truest part of yourself; and your home here in this body, the home of this body.]

When do you know it is time to leave the water?