

## What the Call of the Deep Teaches

*Doug Talley*

Of the ocean what can we say? It is one pure cask,  
and that immensely, of salted water to the brim.

Our lives turn such narrow slivers of consideration  
by contrast, largely what the eye and ear scuttle

to the task at hand, a spoon to stir the soup, a needle  
for mending, a dried blossom of day lily to snip away.

The world spins in a wealth that will soon occlude us,  
yet I am satisfied enough—if little more than color

washed up by daylight in the sea spray of the ship,  
my life, modest surely, and tenuous and evanescent,

includes your full affection, opening a cosmos.  
Now, in the moonlight of the western Caribbean

we are one and riding that salted water in purity,  
with faith, almost, to venture from the ship hand

in hand, step onto the sea, and walk the lighted path  
a full moon casts upon the deep, not a dream, nor

a phantasm of the Nazarene striding the backwash,  
but such a naked clarity as to radiate consciousness

of a single, irrepressible attraction—to step into  
and be one with light, the whole body filled with light.