

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## Shared Seas

By Elizabeth Birch

She dreamed of one day seeing an ocean.  
“But the Black Sea—” I said, having felt  
its salt and sand. “Not the same,” she said, wanting  
to look across something and see no end.  
And though Odessa’s blue horizon holds no land,  
she saw boundaries I barely noticed  
until I left. At the base of the Cape’s curled finger,  
I became distracted by my own  
cold ocean, cold  
like the winter nights she spent at Maidan  
and the winter night eight years later  
when she fled Ukraine, eight-months-worth  
of a baby inside her, husband left behind her  
as she got closer to the ocean.

Now she only dreams of being back  
in the Black Sea’s warm water.  
And I am here, collecting dead  
horseshoe crabs from the Atlantic,  
covered entirely in good luck, wishing  
to nail horseshoes on the walls of her life.  
But only so many creatures are shared  
between the ocean and the Black Sea,  
the waves only stretch so high, the depths  
only so deep, and there’s only so far,  
I tell myself, only so far, I tell myself,  
only so far I can reach.