

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## Etymological Object of the Ocean

By Jennifer Clarvoe

I speak to discover myself—  
to learn how I am made:  
say: both *scallop* and *shell*  
come from the same root,

the *mollusc*'s softness  
colluding with the waves,  
sharing the salt between them,  
long wavelength of days

layering over and over:  
a boundary, a cover—  
inside: a tiny ocean.  
Outside, an Other.

The *rib* of shell  
comes from the ocean's *reef*  
as feather comes from *rush*  
of petrel plying the sky.

So much to learn from the sand:  
discovered by wearing away—  
it does not hope to stay—  
its root is *rub*.

No true thing but its making  
stays alive in its name.  
The root of *shell*  
is *cut*—

as in scale, scalpel, sculpture,  
shield, shoal, shelf.  
To separate myself—  
is this my skill?

An *object* is no thing  
but in motion *toward*,  
thrown, flung—  
willing itself to be song.