

Rhapsody

"Monterey Bay"

by Stephani Veff

The ocean is that vast expanse of water seemingly meeting the sky on the horizon, forging the two blues into one. For nearly all my life I lived near the ocean, an experience embedded in my memory forever. I need only to close my eyes and it all comes back to me; the sights, sounds, and smells, but especially how I feel when I'm at the ocean.

The bay is beautiful to me in all types of weather and each season brings new feelings, almost like the tide brings sea treasures to the beach. Early morning walks to the school bus stop were magnificent, to say the least. The sun would just be peeking above the Salinas Mountains, raining down on the bay creating a reflection so bright one could go blind looking directly at it for too long. The early morning tide rolled in over the jagged rocks creating huge waves that turned into a briskly moving white foam which glided over the sparkling sands on the beach.

Some days would be very windy and the bay would become choppy and covered with white caps that made the bay look like a carelessly frosted cake. The wind would bring with it the salty smell of the ocean, and occasionally the smell of fish from the numerous fishing boats bobbing up and down in the middle of the bay, like toys in a child's bathtub. The smell of salt was usually so dominant that one could almost taste it without actually drinking from the bay, and if one were standing on the rocks at the edge of the beach, the spray from the waves could be licked from his lips.

Even though it is easy to hear the ocean during the day, its sounds become more ominous at night when one is lying in bed. There is no other feeling quite like that of being lulled to sleep by the pounding surf and moaning of the foghorn mingling with the quieter moans of the buoys lying just a short mile from the shore. Occasionally the ocean noises were frightening, most usually when storms caused the waves to rise precariously close to the top of the wall separating the street from the raging ocean. At these times one would wish he were unable to hear the crashing waves beginning to wear away the wall and the boats calling to one another for help.

Nighttime also brings an entirely different appearance to the bay, but whether it is a clear night or a foggy one, the view is always spectacular. On a foggy night, a dark, dank mist hovers close to the surface of the bay, just out of the bay's reach, tempting it to rise up and become enclosed entirely in the shadowy sheet as it floats slowly above, propelled by a light breeze. Clear nights allow one to view the entire bay, framed by the sparkling lights of the city. The full, yellow moon paints a path across the bay, tempting one to step out onto the glassy surface, and follow it on its trek across the midnight-blue sky.

The bay, by itself, is beautiful, but the creatures that live in the bay and the landscape at the edge of the bay, add to its beauty. The sandy shores stretch for miles, sparkling like gold and silver glitter, while the rocks at the beaches edges jut out over the water forming deep, dark caverns where sea animals seek shelter from the harsh waves. Paths near the shore's edge are lined with brilliant lavender-colored flowers, thousands of them framing the bay with a brightly colored border.

The sands on the beaches, warmed by the sun, invite one to take a nap after a long swim in the cold, tumultuous bay. Although the sand on the ocean floor is the same as that on the beach, this sand is as cold as the ocean itself and is constantly burying one's feet deeper and deeper as the undertow tries to pull him out to sea, amongst the flagella-like seaweed.

The ocean's affect upon most who view her seems to be one of awe. It's affect on me has been one of awe, but also one of understanding. The bay has grown to be my friend, reaching out a caring hand in the form of a wave, and carrying away my troubles. I feel restless when it is raging in the midst of a storm, and when the bay is calm and its surface is as smooth as glass, I become calm just looking at it.

Whether or not I ever decide to live by the bay again, I know that, at the very least, I will be sure to visit occasionally. The memories of the bay are always just a thought away. They will never be taken away from me and can only be added to in the future. The fascination I feel for the ocean is held in poems I have written, but they will never be able to equal the greatness of the real thing.

"The Werewolf and The Statue"

When the full moon rose above the snow laden mountains,
The Wolfman ventured forth from his lair,
Dark, lithe, a shadow with eyes like cold ice,
He gazed upward at the stars with a malevolent grin.

Like a fleeting grey wraith he moved through the forest,
Downward into the valley where the ruined temple of Helios lay,
Here to pause amongst the ancient stone pillars, white like bone,
reading the runes and of the secret of fire.

Hidden in the gloom a marble figure watched the intruder,
With a green hate from the depths of hell it stared,
A stone statue of Erebos, animated from its marble silence,
An instrument of malice and death bent on destruction.

Cain was about to unlock the secret when he heard muffled footsteps
Turning he came face to face with that stony visage,
Hands with incredible force closed on his throat,
The green fire seemed to burn brighter under the stony brows.

Clawing desperately at his foe Cain fought in vain,
For though he tore chips of marble from the statue's arms,
The grip continued to tighten upon his throat,
And as the world began to dim, he feared all was lost.

With his last bit of strength, the werewolf raked the statue's face
Clawing at the burning green eyes,
The marble form screamed, throwing his opponent to the ground,
Then staggering back, it crashed through a garden wall.

Snarling in fury Cain leaped into the gap and the courtyard beyond,
Smashing headlong into the stone shape trying to rise,
Cain was stunned, reeled away and fell to his hands and knees,
As the stone form once again turned towards its prey.

The wolfman snatched up a bronze arm,
Fallen from the statue of Helios, which towered over him,
Stood shakily to his feet and waited,

Erebos grabbed at his hated foe,
And Cain swung the arm of the god with all his might,
He connected, there was thunder, heat and flames,
The wolfman was tossed twenty feet as the form of Erebos exploded.

Cain awoke on his back, his left arm in terrible pain,
His gaze fell upon a smouldering heap of rubble,
The acrid smoke drifting lazily skyward,
Helios's statue standing whole and unscathed once again.

Limping, dazed and bloody Cain left the courtyard,
Passing by the sun god's image with its smouldering sacrifice,
He saw Erebos's head, its eyes empty and dark,
As he began ascending the mountain to his den,
The dawn was coming, and he knew its secret.

Bryon J. Sander

