

**Sawnie Morris**

## **Coral & Turquoise**

If you find yourself breathing underwater, it may be a memory of the early Cretaceous Period, life as a fish or a young amphibian.

Traces of sunlight fan through wind-pebbled turquoise. You stand on the sand below the above, its watery burst into oxygen.

Traces of a coral bracelet appear. The tiny gold chain of its safety clasp lifts on your wrist like a delicate seahorse.

A seahorse is an underwater *hippocampus*. A human hippocampus is shaped like a seahorse and floats in the curves of the temporal lobe.

The “temporal” is a temple near the skull.

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An almost identical bracelet belonged to your husband’s mother, a Jew who survived the death storm of 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe.

She crossed and re-crossed the Pyrenees by foot (fleeing one war, returning from another). She dyed her hair blonde, married for money (the first time), had multiple lovers (from the most beautiful and strong, she gave birth to a son), threw extravagant parties, transported allied soldiers out of France & across Spain in the trunk of a Rolls-Royce.

*In a world I was freed — through another world — and in an image I was freed*

— *through the trace of an image* — . (Mary of Magdala)

Her kitchen table. The glass of water. The coral bracelet encircling her wrist.

A seahorse on the wrist of a dream may be a clasp resisting *forgetfulness*. A delicate chain of events may circle or signal safe passage, a round trip.

*It is not necessary to “read” the riddle. The pattern itself is sufficient and it is beautiful,*  
H.D. said.

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If you are standing below water on a sea-shelf, you may be immersed in the mother liquid, *her definite volume with no fixed shape*. You may be in over your head.

Soon you will swim deeper and farther into the turquoise.

*The body of the mother lies hidden behind the navel of the dream.* (Jonte-Pace)

You want to wear the coral bracelet on your journey, to feel the spark of its elegance.

*It can make one happy or make one lament; it is a closed archive basket of the gods.*

(Sumerian dream text)

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You drop the circlet. It tumbles down, lands on a tiny outcrop of igneous rock.

(^ ^) ^

You grasp the bangle with your prehensile foot, curl its circle to your *fingers*, slip it onto your wrist, braceleted by multiple lifelines.

Seahorses wrap their tails around the fingers of a coral reef to anchor themselves during a storm.

The root meaning for “wrist” is “to turn or to bend.”

Wearing the bracelet, you wrist into the intensifying turquoise ...*agua láctea*, *sinuosa*, Coral Bracho says.

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In the pre-dawn you wake, make a run to town and *el mercado* (in the masked hour, fewer people crowd the aisles); your husband sleeps, immersed in the nautical life of tilted stones, underwater towers.

Outside the air is bitter, cold, the moon is a lap-dog. Glittering needles of light burst from the snowfields to converse with their relatives, the stars.

*Neither she nor her son, / ... could alter the course of a star, / glowing by turns as ice, by turns as fire.”* (H.D.)

You recall the predawn dance of sea horses in pairs, facing one another, their tails entwined.

You recall making love on the floor in the evening, in the forest of the bed at night, at day-break beneath the open eyes of the windows, and often, over

lunch, against the door or a wall.

The body of a seahorse is ringed by bracelets of bone with a coral net for a crown. Like a human fingerprint, the cornet is unique to each seahorse.

150 million seahorses are killed every year for medicines. Over 1 million are caught, dried, and sold as seashells. 1 in 1000 survive longer than 6 weeks in an aquarium.

Seahorses couple for life — and for *after-life*. When one dies, the other refuses a new mate.

When one dies, the other may grow tufted skin resembling seaweed to mask itself.

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A coral bracelet by itself encircles nothing.

Your mother-in-law's bracelet — in waking life — is made of wood stained the color of coral and of brass.

Your mother-in-law's bracelet -- given to you before she died —has no gold chain or safety clasp.

The coral bracelet of your dream is a spirit gift — from your mother-in-law and what she represents — *Eros* and *Thanatos*, the great Mystery, Her, underwater radiance.

*This is the hidden current beneath the history of what can be grasped —*