

# There by the Waters of Margate I sat down and Wept

*For T. S. Eliot*

Maggie Harris

There, by the waters of Margate I sat down and wept  
whilst the dolphins turned in the restless sea  
and the fishermen warped their nets  
and the troubled souls and the mournful seals  
all turned their eyes to the skies  
and my mind leapt like the troubled fish  
in that tense and turbulent sea  
where the birds like bulls ruled bullishly  
and the mothers of sons not returned from the front  
continued to shake their angry fists at the clouds  
it was the beginning of the end and the end begins  
on English shorelines where they dream of victory  
at the ships pulling out for America's real and distant dreams  
where pious men and upturned women bear their sorrow like queens  
and the words i seek in my midnight keel  
this language I'm bequeathed  
are runners sent to the battlefield to gauge the critics  
waiting there with their ink-filled pens and Vivienne's barbs  
vultures, sirens, robbers, thieves waiting to pluck the eyes  
of Tiresias not knowing he was already blind  
not knowing my only defence is words and words  
and always words that litter the landscape  
indefinitely like the bleached bones of buffaloes  
startlingly, consistently white on the prairies  
of the New World.