

## Salt Water Rocking Chairs

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We found an insect in his ear  
on the first day that he came to my class,  
a refugee from the weak arms of Burundi.

He patted it slightly and whispered  
that butterflies were fluttering  
on his eardrum and the water

his mother had poured inside to make it stop,  
had made them angry. His eyes were like the rings  
of a tree stump, old and endless,

with a haunting look like they had yet to stop  
seeking. I think of those eyes when he  
calls to tell me that his mother no longer wakes

him for school and his shoes  
are old. I think of adorning his small  
apartment with alarm clocks whose

arms tick-tock and grow, gently  
awakening him from his pillow, the knapsack  
of his dreams.

But since his soles would still be  
worn, I think of taking him away from unlit light  
bulbs, his mother's alcohol, and their moss-like carpet.

We would go to the Dead Sea  
where we could float,  
in salt water rocking chairs, weightless

on the moon of kings,  
mummies, and Aristotle, salt stuck  
between our molars. We would leave lasting

handprints upon the surf as the lips  
of clouds puff wind into  
our faces, like veils of clear

air. His skin adorned with salt  
crystal diamonds, the sea's garland

between the vales of nations.

Within the lowest point  
of the world, the bathtub  
drain for the oceans, we would be

the compass needle sewn into the sunlight  
zone of the water consuming all  
that the Jordan River has to give.

I think of finding him a home  
away from late, old shoes, into the salinity  
of Poseiden's arms, healed by the sea.