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Pet Store

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Pet Store

Abstract

Original poem by Lauren Hand.

Keywords

poetry, Lauren Hand, pet store, beta fish

Disciplines

Creative Writing | Poetry

Comments

Written for ENG 305: Free Verse and Form in Poetry.

Pet Store

Lauren Hand

My friends and I float on the screen
like fish in tanks at a pet store.
Stacked in rows,
we watch each other through
double-layered glass.

When I was small
I had a beta fish named Ruby,
and once a week I used to clean
her tank.
I would scoop her up
with a swishy green net
and plop her in a bucket,
where she'd race around in circles
while I rinsed the glass.

Two months ago,
my friends and I were in the ocean.
It was March,
alright for fish,
but too cold for people,
and after we splashed for a moment
we raced
back up the beach
to the house, where we piled
ourselves into a warm bath.

Once, I dropped Ruby
while trying to move her
from bucket to bowl,
and she flapped
on the kitchen counter,
small wet thing full of life that she was,
small red scaley beating heart that she was,
until my mother,
not a first time rescuer,
scooped her up and plunked her

back into her tank.

I want to reach into the glass,
and scoop my friends
up out of the screen
where they float like unhappy fish
at a pet store,
and with a steady hand
rescue them from their tanks and
drop them back into the ocean,
or into the tub.

For now I just tell them *thank you*,
from the bottom of
this wet, scaley heart that I have,
from the bottom of
this red, beating heart that I have,
for sharing the ocean,
for sharing the tub.
For now, I tell them
though we are apart,
wherever they are,
they will always be loved.