

Content Warning: Suicide Attempt

The Time I Went into the Water

Lynne Schmidt

Last night, I told a boy
about when it was serious.

I told him about the walk to the ocean,
stubbing my feet and tripping
over loose rocks as I marched
like a river to flow into
Mother Ocean.

I told him about taking off my clothes,
everything except the bra and underpants
because didn't want the fishermen to flinch
too much when they found me.
But the shirt and pants, they were nice
and could be donated to someone else.

I told him about how gently I folded the clothes,
how the moon looked away to offer me privacy,
how the sand felt like snow against my bare feet.

I told him about how my sisters didn't answer the calls,
how I tried, one last time to reach out
because I was serious this time.

I told him,
that I made my way into the water,
waves gently offering entry,
hands wrapping around me easy passage,
teeth clenching against the freeze of midnight.

I tell him
this was years ago.

But I still have those clothes.

Lynne Schmidt is the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, and a mental health professional with a focus in trauma and healing. She is the winner of the 2020 New Women's Voices Contest for her collection, *Dead Dog Poems* (forthcoming from Finishing Line Press). She is the author

of *Gravity* (Nightingale and Sparrow Press) which was listed as one of the 17 Best Breakup Books to Read in 2020, and *On Becoming a Role Model* (Thirty West), which was featured on The Wardrobe's Best Dressed for PTSD Awareness Week. In 2012 she started the project, AbortionChat, which aims to lessen the stigma around abortion. When given the choice, Lynne prefers the company of her three dogs and one cat to humans.