

Marilyn Johnston

## South Jetty, Yaquina Bay

*Newport, Oregon*

The waves are familiar,  
but each time is like a new,  
unquenchable thirst—like  
the push and pull of the undertow,  
each breaking and receding.

So often, when they were small,  
I'd bring the children here to dip  
their toes in the cold surf,  
running out to chase the seagulls  
at the water's edge. I wanted  
them to be mesmerized—  
the distance to the horizon  
nonending through their eyes;  
the amazement when a baby sea lion  
was found on the shore, waiting  
for its mother's return.

Now I am that kind of mother—  
returning, looking and looking,  
frantically calling  
their names.