



DESCENT

She lives at the bottom of it, past the clump of brush-weed, its hesitating fronds skimming as you go, trying to hold on to you, grabbing at your clothes, green, slippery tacks like water-fingers. Sooner or later you will make your way to her door because you realise now that all the current-wraiths lead to her, her abode at the deepest point, so much deeper than anyone thought.

Still, you have not quite fathomed what has happened. One moment, you were trying not to breathe because you knew to do so would be the end, and the next you had no choice in it, and you inhaled and it was quicker than you thought it would be and more merciful, and such a relief. Now you are part of the water, and it feels like you always belonged here; you are liquid itself, flowing in silvery monotones, a private deluge: water, falling.

You heard the stories, of course, the haunted boathouse, and women going missing, but you ignored them like so many others because they dragged the lake each time and found nothing. You can see now why they did not because you drifted through the gap into the abyss which maybe, just maybe will lead all the way to the centre of the earth, the smallest of gaps and the deepest of abysses no-one above knows about.

The weight he - not ghost, not spirit, but frighteningly and disappointingly human - tied around your feet is like an anchor but no longer a fearsome or even unpleasant one. It gives you direction and you drift downwards in a billowing wave of peace.

She is waiting for you, she who was the first, along with the others. Welcome, sister, she says - this bond which will forever tie you together - welcome to the lake, and as you try to remember what you left behind up above the surface you find your thoughts are already congealing and sealing over what was your life, and you look at yourself mirrored in the graceful ebb and flow of those who shared your fate, and you know that what you have found has its own ethereal beauty, because you will never be alone.