

Tugboat
Jessica Chen

i.

In ancient photos of sepia
and black and contrasts of white
he sits alonesome, dangling pale *sunlightdespised* feet
along grass that will never taste color
surrounded by a grey ocean on his island
given only a tree for company
wondering if solitude is his destiny

ii.

In a not-so-faraway world, a girl drives tugboats
watching cobalt oceans turn in gradients of slategray
irondark, obsidianblack
pigments *washingaway* like
the sky during springtime rain
hitting the rocky, unvisited shore of
boy's island

iii.

With a rope twined by fate, friendship, *curiosity*
she lassos his blanched tree companion, grinning
"You'll be fine, the world is a beautiful place"
driving her tugboat with his isolated island along the path
where balloons litter the sky
and the sun kisses the stars
and embraces the boy whom it longed to see but was so deprived of—
and he is drenched
in that world, tasting the sweet flavors of blues,reds,purples,sunburntoranges
"Is this what I've been missing my entire life?"
and suddenly life
is more than just black and white piano keys

iv.

They net falling paintdrops and gumdrops and sundrops,
feed fish whose scales glisten silver coins dipped in metal wash
searching for clones of his *used-to-be island*—
tying together (saving) those solitudechildren
and linking the sepia landmasses
like a connect-the-dots of stars
creating a *something* out of a *nothing*
a constellation which pushes the tides of that ironclad sea
sailing the *Argo Navis*
and lighting the world abright with color.