

How to Walk on Water
by Dana Kroos

I.
If it is frozen. Or shallow. Or thick with reeds.

Also, a dispersal of weight over space
less than the pressure of surface tension;
sometimes imitated
by a configuration of motion and speed:
to hydroplane,
to skim,
to move forward at a rate that supersedes mass;
wherein the internal pressure (P) of the object
dictates a density equal to the speed (V)
but greater than the surface tension (T)

$$\text{Tension (T)} = \frac{\text{Force (F)}}{\text{The Length over which the force acts (L)}}$$

II.
Devastating to see the world clearly,
when the shore becomes just a soggy marsh
eroded, beaten by storm and sea;
the piers of plank and metal;
the house on the hill overtaken with mold
and never enough for what we needed.

Once we needed next to nothing.
“You eat like birds,” they told us
we took this as proof: we were avian
waiting to sprout wings.
We played that this was our island alone,
the dock a concept on the verge of completion,
the house learning to be a boat.
How was I to know you believed it wholly?
I believed it also.

III.
Gerridae *plural noun* Ger·ri·dae \ˈjerə,dē\
Phylum: arthropoda Class: Insecta

Order: Hemiptera Suborder: Heteroptera
a family of insects with the ability to run atop the
water's surface. Sometimes called water bugs,
water striders, pond skaters, water skippers, Jesus
bugs.

Always in summer the water bugs,
legs outstretched to the corners of a cross,
bodies hovering over still reflections.

This is why the stones skip,
what allows the glass to overflow
but not spill, a suspension bridge
inside out.

Water—not one thing,
but many things
attracted to one another.
You said, “magic.”

Gravity pulling downward
to lock molecules together,
like children holding hands, singing,
Red Rover, Red Rover;
the brace before impact,
the breath in unison.

You said, “hold your breath.”

IV
Some places exist in time rather than space.
Some memories are dreams
that we construct together.
In the city the rain hits the only window.
My apartment, in the basement, floods.
The carpet goes soft beneath my bare feet.
I think of you,

how you would have loved the outside
flowing in; how you would have imagined
we were at sea; how you would have claimed
we could fly, we could float, we could live
half-way above and below the surface.

But the water bug holds so delicately
to that thin film on the surface;
the stone is solid and sure
of its own composition;
the object moves with such speed
it is never anywhere long enough
to be known.

V.

I could never hold at the last minute,
our hands sweaty and tight together,
your skin hot and fluid,
my palm seemed to absorb it.

Red Rover, Red Rover,
we sang,
but I feared the collision;
the pain of the chain broken
so much greater than that of release.

No one came to your funeral,
your skin gone white like the sky.
I told you, "this coffin is really a boat;
beneath the ground there is a sea
with islands the shape of clouds
that race across the water."