

Stephen Robertson

Story

—Tell me.

—I am conceived by the wind, the wild wind
and borne on the blue ocean.

In the beginning I am small and playful, like the wind.
It changes direction from minute to minute;
gives me siblings to chase or criss-cross
over and under
as we skip on the backs of the older ones.

The wind grows steady and purposeful.
We form into rows and columns across the deep.
Without knowing what it is,
we take on the purpose of the wind;
we march in formation.
The wind feeds us, makes us strong.

Occasionally, I catch glimpses
of the ranks ahead.
But mostly, I can see
only the back
of the one immediately in front.

The wind is angry, howling and shrieking.
It pushes us harder,
makes us grow broader and taller,
sweeps spray from our tops,
drives us ever onward.

Where are we going, so fierce and so fast?
I know only the wind and the rain
the sun and the clouds by day,
the stars and the darkness by night,
the ocean, the blue-green-grey-black ocean,
the bottomless, endless ocean.
Where are we going?

Something is changing: the ocean
is bottomless no longer.
I feel something
never felt before—
something solid underneath us
churning the water,
disturbing our roll,
getting higher and closer.

And the noise.
A few ranks ahead, I see them
rearing up, up, turning over
and hear them crashing down.
What is this cataclysm?
Now the one just ahead
goes head over heels
on hard, unyielding
rocks and stones,
falls back under my feet.

No time, no time.
Already I am toppling over him
crashing, splitting, breaking.
I am lost. The one behind
will finish me completely
and for ever.