

THE
SPOON
RIVER Poetry Review

Carol Hunter-Clarke

A Woman's Heart's an Ocean
for my great aunt

Once when the sea smoothed her pleats
and the sun pulled the knots from your memory
you took to the river
and returned long after
village fires had gone to sleep

you toss your drawers on the bank
strange how you unmask in water
(the woman turning into fish,
the fish returning to woman)
as you fin under rocks
I edge the shallows, clothed

Ooman havot a ocean, y'hear
which never explained about the golden comb
that captures the sun on your window
and *why the shell roar so much* on stormy days
and why you warn about sleeping with my window open
daring the full flesh of the moon
would it *carry me to mother meek hole* and drown me?

now you insist that the basin of sea water
at your feet is the ocean
and you're captain of the ship
and I must *run down deck as rain come*
(nana a captain doesn't sew pillow slips
and look your mermaid smile is turning)

the comb sheds teeth
nana I can't be boatswain because I'm tied
with anancy webs

I have no oceans to fill
I'm content with riverbeds