Poem: **Salt Song**

*by Samm Carlton*

Cut out along one horizon
our ocean slips on currents
through holes close-set as eyelets
between the Elizabeth Islands,
a chant of names:
Nonamesset, Uncatena, Great Naushon
and Nashawena, Cuttyhunk, Penikese,
the little Weepeckets, and Pasque

Heaving up whale-like
to the south
and blocking my view of England
is Martha’s Vineyard.

Small white sails poke up
along its shore,
and out there somewhere
lost from here in the mist,
Nantucket.

I close my eyes and sing to my younger self
listening to the echo
Nonamesset, Uncatena,
Great Naushon and Nashawena

In between are memories
jumbled by tide and waves,
these places, people with or without names:
my family, best summer friends, lovers
birth boats badminton
marriages, swimming
and death.

I lie flattened on the sand.
Deep currents change places:
discomfort sadness pain.
Unknown voices swirl, people sun,
their children dig swim run

as this afternoon on Nobska,
like so many decades
and countless days before,
rolls down
pulls away.

Nonamesset, Great Naushon.

Currently writing poetry, Samm was a professional dancer in NYC who spent summers as she was growing up, in a house overlooking Vineyard Sound and the islands. She choreographed a concert of multi-media works that was performed in Woods Hole in 2004. She now lives in Waquoit.