

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.