

towards the pinprick lights of the villagers' torches.

The search party, to a man, looked in stunned disbelief at the approaching sight; their missing, beloved girl Ursula, riding on the back of a huge, ferocious-looking cat. Ursula gave the men a wave and a wide smile as Malkin sauntered past, oblivious to their presence, plodding steadily towards the village. The men fell quickly into step behind them and followed, all the while looking completely bewildered.

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Tamara, who had been sitting quietly next to Jennifer for what seemed like eternity, looked up from where she had been staring into her lap, seeming to sense that her daughter was safe and was now coming home; it was like a sixth sense that only mothers possess. She sprang up from the sofa and rushed out of the cottage, standing in the middle of the street and peering hard into the darkness. At first she saw the torches of the search party some way in the distance, and her spirits fell at the thought that perhaps after all they had not been successful in their search and her instinct had been wrong. Then she made out the figure of a huge cat, carrying her daughter on its broad back, walking towards her. She shrieked in horror and ran swiftly forward.

Upon seeing her mother illuminated in the few dim outside lights of several of the cottages, Ursula excitedly jumped down from the cat's back, and patted its head. She waited until Tamara was only a few feet away, then opened her arms out wide.

**"Mummy, Mummy! I've had such a really big adventure!"** the child shouted, jumping up and down. She then shook her head in shock and disbelief at the sound of her own, newly found voice.



*Dave Ludford is a poet and short story writer from Nuneaton, England. He is the author of over 40 published works of poetry and narrative fiction. He is currently at work on his first novella.*

*His stories have been published in Schlock! magazine in the UK ([www.schlock.co.uk](http://www.schlock.co.uk)), Fever Dreams magazine ([www.feverdreams.co.uk](http://www.feverdreams.co.uk)) and poems at [www.poetrysuperhighway.com](http://www.poetrysuperhighway.com)*

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## SEA-BOUND STROLL

now retsina  
softening  
old stitches  
and  
summer jaunts  
fomenting the sepia waves  
of lassitude  
the fresh catch grilled at sundown  
dabbled memories  
nea paralia nea paralia  
and an opalescent sea  
rustling across a bloated brochure  
called gateway  
or maybe  
sea-bound stroll  
with azure galore  
beguiling the eyes  
like those hydrangeas flaunting  
a clear blue  
within easy reach  
from the deck flowing to  
a time

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when  
 salty pebbles  
 keep rolling in  
 on the wounds  
 and the spume  
 swathes a heart in the sand  
 vowing  
 like a touch of warm cotton swabs  
 now-here  
 now-here  
 now-here  
 said once  
 love you  
 and  
 walked by the sea

## BETWEEN ROOT & WINGS

your black eyes  
 underneath  
 the lap of soft soil  
 escaped all flowers gouged out of sky

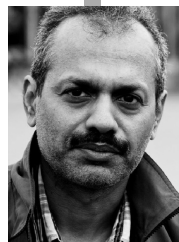
like wings  
 I had never soul  
 but  
 life so full of sky

## WRAPPINGS OF MISNOMER

the little bloodroot is not a metaphor this time  
 end of day to find out  
 how does it feel  
 to be a flower  
 to be bleak in this far-close emptiness  
 to become a bleach in my paintbox looking for  
 silence

my bottle of bourbon is filled with cubes of souffle  
 emerald plague  
 lighthouse and salt clouds  
 silhouette of viper  
 and desperation imagined with violin

end of day to find out  
 what is to be a simplification devoid of any slit  
 what are the eyelashes of how to think  
 an anemone awed again and again at every breeze



*Debasis Mukhopadhyay holds a PhD in literary studies & lives & writes in Montreal, Canada. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in The Curly Mind, After the Pause, Posit, Mannequin Haus, Yellow Chair Review, Thirteen Myna Birds, Of/With, I am not a silent poet, New Verse News, Scarlet Leaf Review, With Painted Words, Silver Birch Press, Quatrain.Fish, Whale Road Review, and elsewhere.*

*Follow him at <https://debasismukhopadhyay.wordpress.com/> or @dbasis\_m on Twitter.*