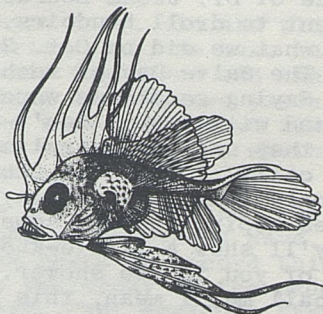


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"THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED A WHALE"

This poet read from something she'd translated from the Muck-Tups, a tribe near the Boring Strait, so I dozed off.

In a dream I was at the wedding and while ray and marlin stared, I asked --
Where did the groom get his tux?
What were they going to do on their wedding night?
How?
Where would they honeymoon, Sea World?

Then instead of vows like hers the whale sang from his Greenpeace album, "The Nomad's Relief," and I saw the future in her adoring eyes:

She at the shore near 5:00 as he swam home from work. Her day? Shopping, a nap, phone calls, a swim. Then his: "Those Drastic Fathoms."
Some nights she'd mount his brow, they'd speed through breakers. Usually he'd sleep close to the shore as he dared and she, blocks away, on the side of the bed nearest him.

I woke to The End and the poet who wiped my eyes, clasped both my hands in hers and said, "You've just made me the happiest woman in the world."