

Black Opal
By Gabe Oppenheim

I met her underwater, off the coast, on the night of the dark pendant moon.

I saw her legs, kicking away from me, and then her upturned neck when she rose for air. Then her face in profile, against the outcropping of rock in the distance.

I should have kissed her then.

She swam toward the rock, and I followed, stroke for stroke, yet silently – my arms slipping through water, fountain pens in a jar of ink.

We reached a pebble beach, and she emerged from the water all at once, as if it shrank from her. I pushed off a few smooth stones buried in the sand and raised myself to her.

A black one-piece suit like a cocktail dress. Dark eyes. Dark hair. Wet.

“It’s not yours,” she said, looking up at the rock, wider at the top than the base – it would soon break off into the sea.

“Neither yours,” I said.

I sized up both figures before me, skin and stone.

I glided past her, to a boulder four feet-high. I raised one leg and pushed. We looked into each other’s eyes as I rose above her. I extended my arm.

She wended her way toward me, stepping to one side and then the other, never direct. Then my hand was beneath her angular chin.

“There’s no coming back before dawn,” I said. “To climb is one thing, to descend quite another.”

She cast her black eyes upward, so they took in all the opalescence of the moon.

She latched onto my hand, stretching a bare foot onto the slippery rock. I pulled her close. I felt her next breath on my lips. “I wonder,” she said, raising her arm to a ledge above us and pulling up, “how the sunrise appears from the top.”