

Ocean Tenets

Tara Ryan

As a ocean tenant you must pledge

first, to look through the submarine looking glass
to walk the shore no one cleans anymore and
watch for the soft eyes of wild salmon and breath of a geoduck
wade with me in the salish sea,
see her swaddling our coasts

Whispering "Ocean, you are a cosmic rarity and I thank my lucky sun for you"

check through every telescope and know this is our only one

As a ocean tenant you must pledge respect and appreciation

for tradition, for indigeneity, for creatures from phytoplankton to orca,
for non-white people, their way of life and fishing rights

environmentalism it's not a splash guard to hide behind
to attack culture, ancient tradition, and the means to survive

light no torches on the east side or the reservation

As a ocean tenant you must pledge

dreams of bycatch bygone, sharks and whales set free
bans on trawling, the deforestation of the sea
and to the fight for peaceful oceanic preserves and sovereignty

As a ocean tenant you must pledge to vote

with your time, your dollars, your voice
for those that cannot, innocent and guilty, bioluminescent and caged in our city
to leave be the wisdom of the sea
call for action at city hall
to end fishing subsidies and mass-marketing of
sustainability
we have until 2048, sign before it's too late