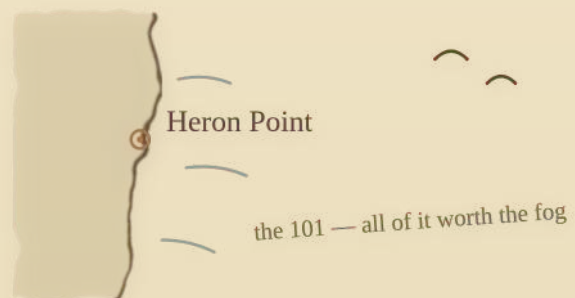




Eleanor's Notebook

SEVEN SEAS · SEVEN WHALES

MOVEMENT I · THE AUDUBON YEARS



THIS NOTEBOOK BELONGS TO

E. GREER

and now to

left wing first.
he held still for that one.



BRANDT'S CORMORANT

Urile penicillatus · Plate I

“He dries his wings like a man airing his
only coat. No vanity in it. Thirty-one
seconds, today. I timed him. He did not
care.”

timed him again Tuesday — 28s.
The coat is improving.

“The heron has taught me more about waiting than any winter. He is not patient. He is certain. There is a difference, and the fish knows it too late.”



GREAT BLUE HERON

Ardea herodias · Plate II



three tries to draw one beat.
he needed none.

TUFTED PUFFIN

Fratercula cirrhata · Plate III

“A serious face and ridiculous eyebrows. He flies like an argument against flying. And yet — every spring, back. W. says he reminds him of someone. He looked at me when he said it.”

“Ten thousand of them on the ledge, and each mother finds her own egg by its speckles. I painted one and lost her at once in the crowd. The murre would tell me: look closer.”

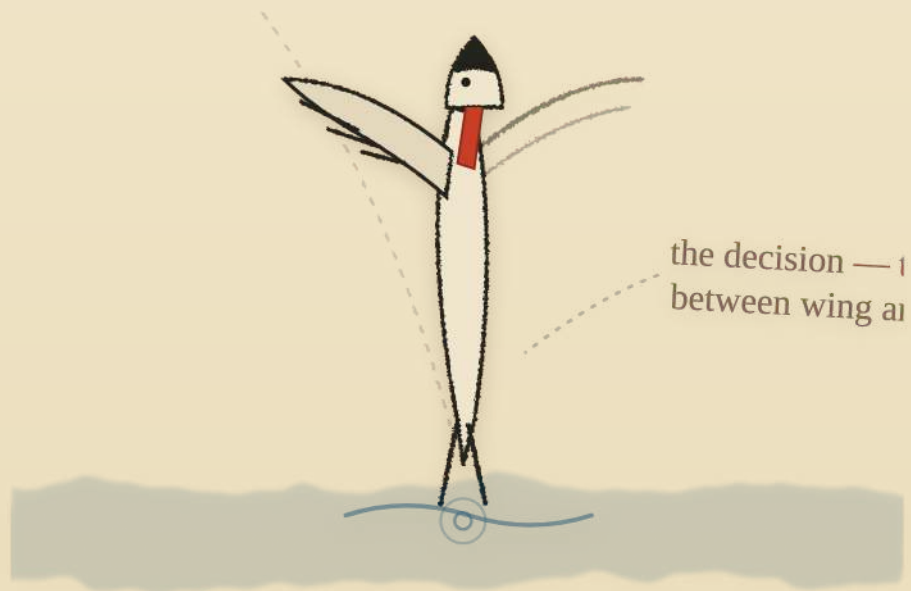
W. says the tern is showing off.
(He is right. See Plate V.)



her. (I think.)

COMMON MURRE

Uria aalge · Plate IV



CASPIAN TERN
Hydroprogne caspia · Plate V

“The tern does not fish. The tern decides, and the sea agrees. I have tried to paint the moment of decision for eleven years. Today, almost.”

“They fly an inch above the waves and never touch. Old pilots, all of them. When I see the squadron pass, low and unhurried, I stand up without meaning to.”



an inch above — never touching

BROWN PELICAN

Pelecanus occidentalis · Plate VI

black is not one colour.
it took four.



BLACK OYSTERCATCHER

Haematopus bachmani · Plate VII

“All black, with a bill like a struck match.
She shouts at the tide twice a day and the
tide ignores her twice a day. We are great
friends.”

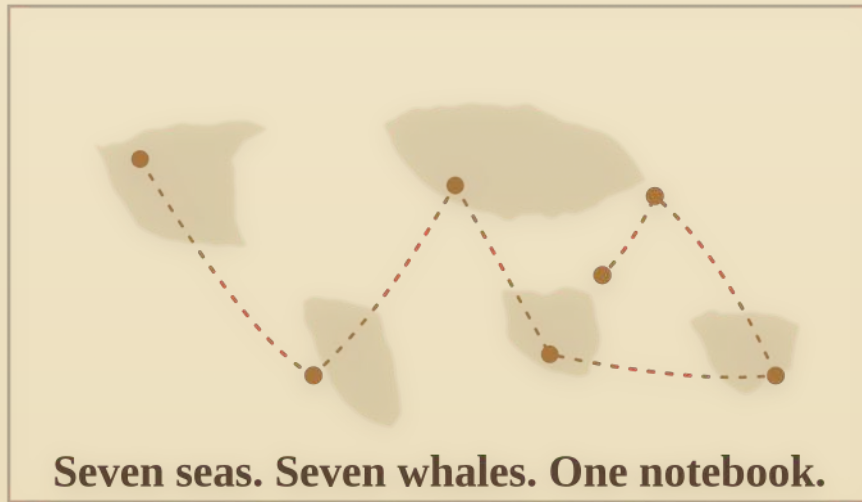
Saw an albatross once, far out,
from W.'s boat. Did not paint it.
Some things you keep.



**“I have spent thirty-eight years
drawing wings. Today I saw a gray
whale breach off the point.**

They fly too. Slower — but they fly.”

THE PLAN



to pack —

- brushes (the good ones)
- the grey coat
- sea-sickness tablets (W. insists)
- W.'s compass — ask first
- this notebook

ASTORIA — FERRY · ONE
ADULT
DEP 07:40 · FOG LIKELY
SEAT: OUTSIDE (ALWAYS)

start with Margaret. She started it.



MARGARET

Eschrichtius robustus · gray whale

**“She rose like a hill deciding to move.
Barnacles on her back — she carries her
own tide-pool with her, a whole village of
passengers. The white mark by her left eye,
like a brushstroke I didn’t make.**

**She feeds in the mud like a farmer, comes up
grey and patient. Every July, this bay. I no
longer say *a* whale. I say Margaret.”**

tide-pool residents, so far —



**“Count the passengers on a gray whale.
Start with the barnacles. You will run out
of patience before she runs out of
passengers.”**

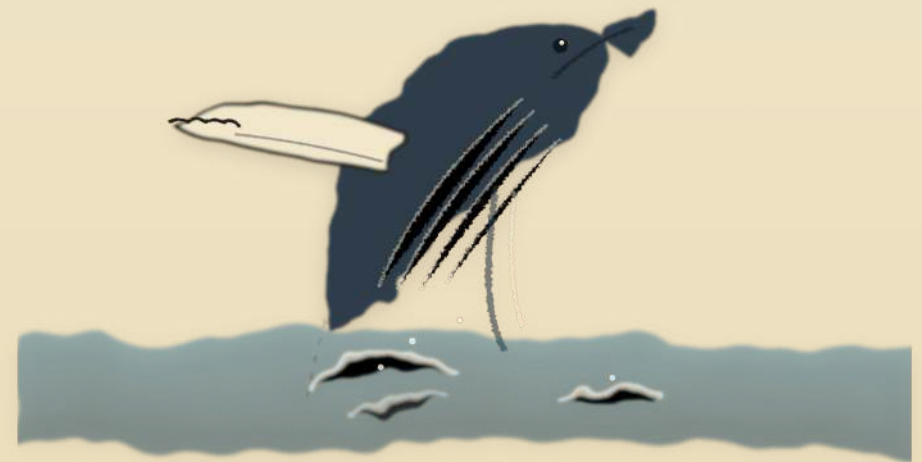
Draw what the tide leaves behind. The sea makes you a gift
twice a day.



“Wings a third of her whole body — the longest arms in the sea. She threw herself into the air and I understood: this is not fishing, not fighting. This is spending joy.

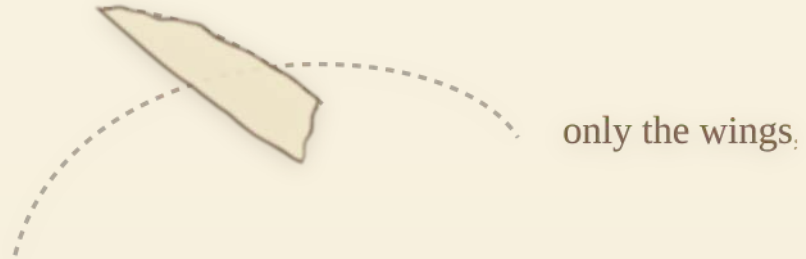
The Brazilians say warm water makes good mothers. She calved here. The calf breathes every three minutes; she waits beneath, a dark patience.”

spending joy — no other verb fits



IARA

Megaptera novaeangliae · humpback



**“Why does she jump? Twelve scientists,
twelve answers. Go and choose yours.”**

Draw something mid-air. Anything. Do not wait for it to
land.



her tail = her fingerprint.
right half from life. left half from memory — unfair to her.

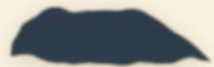


MARÉ

Megaptera novaeangliae · humpback

“Same species as Iara, and nothing alike — sisters take different roads. The underside of her tail is a fingerprint; no two in any ocean match. She crosses the whole Atlantic on it, Caribbean to Iceland, and rests at the Azores like a sailor at a kind port.

I would know her tail in a crowd of ten thousand. So would her mother.”



her



not her



her?

**“Find two identical tails. (You will not.
That is the lesson.)”**

Draw your own fingerprint, large. Now you understand the tail.



“No dorsal fin — a smooth dark hill. The white patches on her head are callosities; each whale wears her own constellation. Her blow splits in two, a V against the morning, so you may read her name from a mile away.

Today she raised her tail into the wind and sailed. For no reason a scientist will sign. For every reason I will.”

TIDE TABLE — WALKER BAY
HIGH 06:12 ◦ LOW 12:40
HIGH 18:47 ← her hour

SEA IV OF VII · WHERE TWO OCEANS MEET



KHANYA

Eubalaena australis · southern right whale



name her: _____

“Her head is a constellation. Name it. Walt names them all from the porch — now it is your turn.”

Draw the wind. (You cannot. Draw what it does instead.)

Four horizontal dotted lines for drawing.



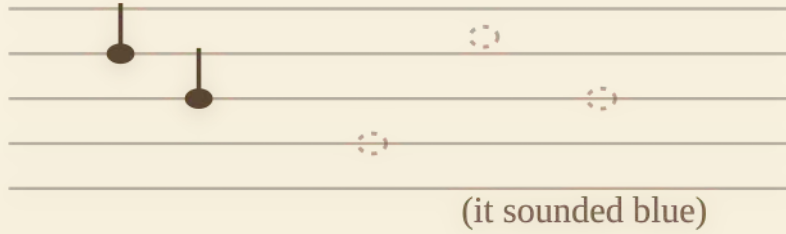


MATILDA

Megaptera novaeangliae · humpback

“The males sing for hours, head-down, still as bells, and every year the whole ocean’s song changes — one of them adds a phrase off the reef and by spring they all carry it, three thousand miles of choir.

Matilda does not sing. She listens, and chooses. I floated above with the recorder and felt the sound in my ribs before my ears. You do not hear a whale’s song. You attend it.”

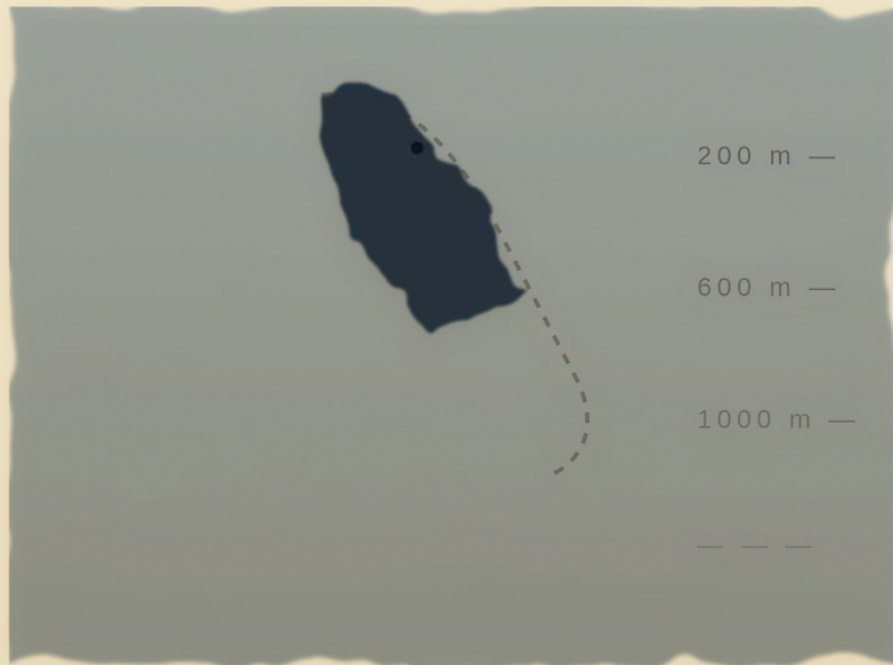


“Their song changes every year. What does this year’s sound like? No one can tell you. That is why you must go.”

Draw a sound. Use lines, not things.

Four sets of horizontal dotted lines for drawing a sound.





U M I

Physeter macrocephalus · sperm whale

“A head like a sea-chest, a third of him, full of oil and echoes. He hunts by clicking into the dark — a mile down, where no light has ever been — and reads the answers.

Ninety minutes on one breath. I begin to envy the patience of his lungs.”

Draw the dark. Leave one thing in it.

**“What colour is the water in Osaka in
October? Go and see.”**

.....

.....

.....

.....



SEA VII OF VII · THE MONSOON ARABIAN SEA



NILA

Balaenoptera musculus · blue whale

“The largest animal that has ever lived — larger than anything the dinosaurs managed. Her heart is the size of a small car. Mine is smaller, and slower these days, and still it

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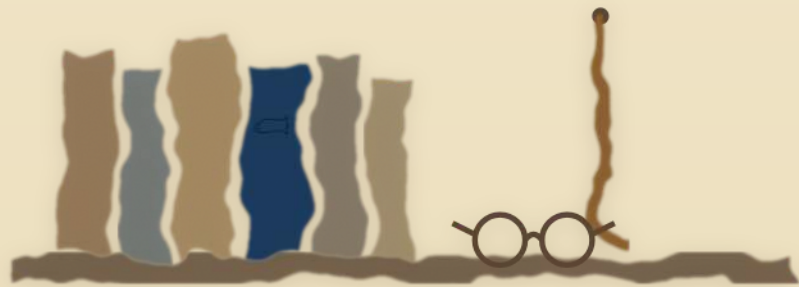
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finish it.





where she left it

“I kept it where she left it. Books don’t gather dust if you mean to open them.

She got as far as the big one. Then she handed me the pencil and said the worst thing she ever said to me: *you’ll know who it’s for.*

Rules of the house: earn each seal at its aquarium — the Atlas will test you, fair but firm. Stamp it here. Don’t rush the Pacific. And if you ever see a grey back off the point in July, stand up. That’s Margaret. She knew Eleanor. — W.”



THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF
HERON POINT WHALE-WATCHERS

EST. 1987

MEMBER CARD · N° 002
NAME: W.
STANDING: PERPETUAL
001 was hers. 003 is yours.

WRITE WHAT YOU SEE

(“not what you expected to see. The sea will notice the difference.”)

GO SLOWLY

(“the whale has been doing this for fifty million years. You have time.”)

COME BACK

(“the watch is not one summer long.”)

MEMBER N° 003 — SIGNATURE _____



DIPLOMA POCKET
PLACE YOURS HERE
WHEN THE SEVEN ARE DONE

“If you are reading this, you finished what I could not. The watch is yours now. Look after them for me. — E.G.”

“Glad it was you. There are three of us now. — W.”

For the eighth sea.