

SELKIES

—after a text from Emily Skaja

We have seen the full oil-slick rainbow of life, deeply felt every shitty color. Raise a glass to our teenage skins,

the ones that didn't fit right. We shed them, wet & glistening, and stepped right out of our girl-selves,

as selkies do. Praise our abandoned bodies, praise the scars. Praise the sleeves long enough to cover

anything. Praise the *weapon in the grass*, the summer we crossed into adulthood. Praise the most thorough

wooing I have ever received, your mixtapes, your secrets, your understanding that morality is what two people make

together when they love one another. Praise, Emily, the way you pledged your fealty to me above any man.

If you leave him, you said, *it will be okay*. I am trying to write a poem about the holy sanctuary I made

with the women I've loved—yellow kitchen, french fries in the oven, watching her win every ring in Super Mario—

but it's a country I left twenty years ago. I gave up my skin. I was willing. I was ready. I didn't know it would be the last time.

The house is still there. The kitchen still yellow. A girl is sweeping the floor. The skin is a flag in the yard,

silvergray and purple. You may enter the house with nothing, *sentry/viridian/cattail* but once you leave you can never go back.