

So once upon a time, there was this great vessel whose entire body was made out of old slave ships. For longer than even the rocks of the sea floor can remember, this vessel had been anchored. Fixed. All the way out in the middle of the ocean.

Living on this vessel were all the people of the world. The good news about these people is that they were imaginative, relational, and receptive. But upon waking, something else would enwrap them. It was grief. They were grieving because they had all lost their ties. No one knew anymore the who before or the how may or the where again, and that silent separation haunted them.

So one day late at night, a person named Worn decided to take a walk in the weaving district. It wasn't something Worn did particularly gladly, but it was at least somewhere that Worn hadn't been in a while.

Upon reaching the floating dock at the edge of the weaving district, haggard Worn creaked to sitting down, legs cast over the side of the vessel. But before Worn could take in the sensation of seawater on skin, a slick black-blue shadow had skulkingly swum up to the side of the dock.

"We're not even able to sleep with grief. Are we? What seems to be our trouble?" said the shadow.

And without any force of resistance, Worn told the black-blue shadow exactly what the trouble was.

"Hmmm. I understand. Perhaps, there is still one thing we could try and do. What if we spoke out our emptiness? But not just stop there. What if we kept speaking, kept speaking 'til every single drop of all this scarcity we hold got whipped into becoming the bubbliest sludge puddle of sneaky language shavings this world has ever seen. What do you think? Tomorrow just before sunset, at the northern edge of the vessel. I dare you to try it. Go and touch your lips to the ocean's surface and speak into it our emptiness. Speak in your own language as if you would wish to give it life. And then the next morning at twilight, go back to that exact same spot and press your lips to the ocean's surface again. But this time, do it only long enough to suck a drop of seawater into your mouth. After the sun is fully risen, spit out that same seawater onto the dead body of a plant. And whatever you do, be sure not to swallow it."

With that last word and an encroaching chuckle, the shadow took flight and disappeared into the black of the night sky.

The next sunset came, and Worn did exactly what the black-blue shadow had said. The next morning's twilight came, and again Worn did exactly what the black-blue shadow had said. Well, almost.

As Worn stood over the dead, vegetative body ready to spit the seawater and win the dare, Worn heard a person enter the room. Before Worn's shame could take full hold, Worn turned towards the door to see who was there and in doing so accidentally swallowed.

In the exact moment that the drop of seawater sank into Worn's stomach, the weather turned and Worn saw that there wasn't anyone at the door. It was merely the ghost named Wake, who had come in. Every spark of light got clouded over with swollen, thick clouds. Every wave of the sea started to roar like the heat of bushfires. And every piece of wind ran like they had nothing to lose. There was just nothing that could keep still; all were unsettled, even the cracks in the vessel's wood.

The ghost Wake had been standing over one such vibrating crack and soon enough that crack gave way and Wake fell into the torrid sea for a whole 20 minutes.

Can you imagine that? Silently screaming for 20 minutes? In that time, the ocean must have heard all manner of things.

Wake got pulled back out of the ocean, back through the vibrating crack, back into the land of the living, back onto the people's dry, wooden land made from old slave ships. The sea became calm. And so did the wind.

It was only then, that the people took notice. Wake had come back with a new face. It was completely covered in barnacles. Those same creatures that attach themselves to the bottom of ships. The shells of these particular barnacles were so jagged that they would cut your fingers with even the lightest, most careful touch.

Before Wake's kin could arrive, a person named Doctor got a hooked scalpel and started scraping at Wake's face. One by one the barnacles fell off. And a person named Cook put them one by one into their great big silver soup pot. One by one the people were fed. And one by one new barnacles sprouted back in the scarred, bloody space their forebearers left. And so the new spiral began.

By the end of the day, the arms of Doctor and Cook were tired. So they sent out word for help. More and more cooks and more and more doctors with more and more gadgets (lasers, chemical gels, water jets, you name it) answered the call. So of course, more and more barnacles were smoothly redacted from Wake's face each day.

It wasn't long before the people had full bellies. After a while this section of the vessel even got a new name. They called it "The place you go to be filled." So people were surprised when news came that there was still one person that hadn't yet taken part in this bounty. Not to say that this person wasn't curious or salivating. It's just that they hadn't gotten around to it as yet, you know?

So the time came when this person's curiosity led them to visit Wake. Upon entering the room, there were two people. First was Wake. And second, at the far edge of the room, was Black Bear, who was named after the animal pelt that dressed their body from head to toe since birth. Black Bear stood up to leave and pass on their seat. But before Black Bear could do that, they spoke:

"Can you do something for us? Don't just see, rather... behold. For eight nights, bear witness to all that Wake is, was, and wishes to become. Please take time for this. Then on the ninth night, visit again and bring with you the 30 words you have gathered from your kin. That is the charge. Will you do this?"

The salivating person replied "Yes, I will."

Then Black Bear stood up with achy legs and disappeared into the night.

The eight nights passed without great consequence. Each night the person came to visit Wake, each night the person sat on Black Bear's stool and each night the person scooped the stool a little bit closer to Wake before beginning their night of witness.

The ninth night finally came. The stool was now so close that the rhythm, sound and warmth of these two people's breath finally managed to touch one another. At this point, their bodies flew and their tongues began to dance.

[The following words are intuitively, yet randomly, yet intentionally interwoven in a poetic chant for at least a minute]

Breath	Acceptance	Access	Digest	Longer
Together	Elders	Love	Fence	Disembark
Survival	Forest	Destruction	Mirror	Storage
Factors	Feeling	Dwelling	Altar	Mo(u)rning
Anchor	Visionary	Gather	Rejected	Off

It had become sunrise. Their dance was slowing down. And for the first time, the vessel, the one made of all those slave ships, started to drift.