

## ABSTRACT

### INTO THE SEA

I first came to Fresno in the late August of 2003, the hottest month of one of the hottest years. Lonely, homesick, and perpetually sweating, I began to think of the sea. Certainly, I have always written about it, but in Fresno, the sea meant everything to me, and not just because I longed for the coolness of seawater. I missed my life in San Jose, its nearness to the coast, how the mist pours into the Santa Clara Valley, smelling of salt. I thought of my family a lot; I thought of our struggles as boat people, how those first moments of loneliness and homesickness were the same as mine. And I longed for the sea because it is a cathedral; there is no place closer to Heaven than the sea. The lonelier I got, the more I missed home, the more I wrote about the sea.

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