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The Faithful

By Elisabeth McKetta

This is the sacrifice that the faithful make: show up in the deep-ocean darkness of night to nurse somebody else's son back to life. He's losing his leg and each time he rolls over in bed the IV comes out. Your job is to set the IV right. You do this while your own boys are at home, sleeping. You do this even when the sick boy's mother locks the door, locking you out, while angry men like sharks surround your car. You do this and you would do it again, for mothers shouldn't lose their sons. Sons shouldn't lose mothers either. You ask the sharks: *who is the leader here?* You ask the leader, *do you have children?* I'll give you all the money in my purse to buy your daughter an Easter dress if you let me get out of here. *Swimming into air is not easy*, you think as you drive away, a window open to let in the dawn. Everything is alive this morning, even the bending ocean on the side of the road. The faithful live here, in everything green. The faithful keep the secret of how things stay green for a long, long time. Across the city your boys are waking. You will be home, soon.

Elisabeth Sharp McKetta teaches writing for Harvard Extension School and is the founder of Poetry for Strangers and the author of two books, *The Creative Year: 52 Workshops for Writers* and *The Fairy Tales Mammals Tell*. Her PhD (Univ. Texas 2009) focused on the intersections between fairy tales and autobiography. This is her second piece published in the Intima; her first piece ("A Bird in the Hand") was co-written with her college roommate Dr. Yo-El Ju. McKetta lives in Boise with her family. www.elisabethsharpmcketta.com

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