

angels of the deep

anglerfish, voracious saints of the ocean floor
that survive where the water is deepest, thrive where the pressure is steepest;
angler, like an angel, like a halo of light beckoning the lost and the found
forward with its glowing lure, a savior, a sanguine liberator of luminosity and teeth;
angler, like a desperate fisherman casting a final line into the abyss
wanting nothing but to feed, feed, feed
feed an all-consuming gluttony drawing in nothing but those with unsatiated wanderlust
diving in the deep of the ocean searching for any sparks, sparks, sparks—

people seem to forget that the Jersey shore was
once the site of a series of attacks, shark attacks,
sharks with their too-sharp smiles and their too-wide canines.
a fluke, they would say, a one-off run of fear and hysteria
in a time, long passed, where hysteria ran wild enough
where people, in their mad dash to the shore to escape polio and the heat
forgot their line to the sand and were burned by viscera and bloody waves;
where people, in their mad dash to the shore to escape jaws with loving teeth
forgot that predators that stand are just as bad as those that swim.

(there was a summer once where heat waves combed through the driest of lands and blurred
sentences into fetters of indistinguishable characters where suddenly the lost were found and lost
again where you just you only you)

i loathe anglerfish with a burning passion,
though their ravenous hunger and demonic teeth were never a cause for concern.
i loathe that in the darkness, the spark of an anglerfish is the only light visible
in a boundless ocean of beauty and atrocity,
blinding you to the silhouette behind it.
i loathe how sometimes i cannot recall
if i was the one swallowed whole
or the one opening my mouth;
but god, do i try.

(they say that the shark attacks of 1916 were freak accidents, flukes of a century past.
i say that they never stopped at all.)