Night Sailing

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Night Sailing

Are you
Unafraid?

*are you are you are you*

They will mock you, the seagulls.
At night their voices will tap you face
Their brittle
Sky-stung voices
Repeating the things you fear.
Will you go out

Late at night
When the wind is dark,
Our thin boat
Whipped from all sides?
You’ll remember how kelp and weeds
Tangled your feet in Useless Bay;
The current’s insistent
Abrading pull, the choke of water
Swimming across the channel;
The storming of waves to shore, logs
Snapped as kindling,
Tremors will splice
Chill to your bones.
You’ll shiver
As splinters of pine
Rising, wavering
The whorls of each trough.
The murmur of freighters will blur,
Firefly beacons
Flickering in,
Out. And rounding Double Bluff
The waves sound our prow,
The spindrift wind a hurl of spray
Or an oblique,
Lulling calm.
The barnacle shoals,
The sunken log-ghosts
Loom
Keening the hull.
You'll trust
Your will
At night. Will you go now,
Can you follow

The instincts of your partner's
Hand? In fog
There is nothing
But sounds the wind plays back
A record
Skipping.

-Jill McGrath