

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

Mary Buchinger
This, a water

color, a loose

leaf tea, a way

-ward daughter

a pencil d'in truce.

Girl At The Beach

I barely get my chair set up on the beach when a chubby little girl adopts me as if she hadn't noticed my very own boisterous boys racing into the water seconds before. She ignores my open book and chats away, no parents, no siblings in sight, as if she'd exhausted everybody, and then she's bringing me mussels, sweet-water mussels, by the handful, "See? They're having a party!" dozens of mussels, "This one's a baby!" to shrivel beside me in the sun-burnt sand.

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Dear Finger

You hold my wedding ring and keep it warm
wrinkle in all the right places
accept the nail emerging always from its bed
you are taller than the pinkie
shorter than the middle
pitch in to hold the stem of the wine glass
independently cover w, s, x, and more on the keyboard
you are not extraordinary, except to me
bone and skin and muscle
instrumental and integral
scarred on the knuckle by the startled one-eyed Chopper
you absorb the oils of garlic and exude them
traced the lion's wing in St. Petersburg
you touch my child and feel the softness of his temple
steady the paper for scissoring
hold taut the cloth for the sewing of buttons
left and minor
you have no qualms.