**Barnegat Light**

In the ‘80s, my sister— Homecoming Queen

and Prom Queen— with Tawny Kitaen-teased hair

and big boobs, got knocked over by a wave

on this very beach and walked up toward our chairs

unwitting.

Her bandeau top had flipped itself around,

laying on only one breast like a pirate’s eye patch,

the good eye commanding all it surveys.

She squeezed her nose then water from her hair,

and the people seated in beach chairs

held their breaths, not wanting to tell her

as though the exposure were theirs.

And they all froze, rapturous of her power:

an Amazon, having removed a breast, in favor of hunting prowess.

And they all froze, rapturous of her shame:

Lilith tanned past a Pre-Raphaelite hue save the lone pale fruit.

And they all froze, vicariously frail:

Eve in the second before epiphany.

And they all cowered.

A Cyclops, lumbering to a stop

over Odysseus’ men, one eye enough

with which to reduce their number

until the sun’s glare

and a pointed shaft

put it out.

\*Poem by L.J. Sysko (ljsysko.com), published in *The Pinch*, issue 39.2, August 2019.