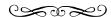
## **RUTH FOLEY**

## On Finding a Clam Shell in the Pine Needles

For a moment I think it must be a moth, some kind of giant flying insect struck down into the duff after a night of seeking a moon too distant for breath. Or a child's bowl, chipped at the edges and cracked in the middle, stained. It is two hands making a cup to lift water from a stream. It is ears bent together, straining toward a fading radio signal. Sea-smooth, it lies open in our small woods, maybe uncovered by the earth-mover a developer brought in to clear land for a house nobody wants, not even him. Maybe carried from shore for the compost, for its slow calcium. Or by a bird—we're not that far away from the tumble and hush after all; sometimes the air fills with salt, smells for a breath or two the way air should, and I am home. I'd like to think it is meant as some kind of signal but I couldn't say what for. To move closer to the shore, I suppose. To wet my feet. I want to lift it to my ear, but it is not the right shell. And what if, after all this time, it has nothing to say to me?

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## ABOUT RUTH FOLEY

Ruth Foley is the author of *Dear Turquoise* (dancing girl press 2013), and her poems have appeared in *Extract(s)*, *Sweet*, *River Styx*, *Bellingham Review*, and *Reed*. She received an MFA from the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast program. A professor of English at Wheaton College, she is also the managing editor of *Cider Press Review*. She lives in Attleboro, Massachusetts, and blogs at *Five Things*, fivethingsthatdontsuck.blogspot.com.

(See 1992)