

MARTHA SILANO

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On a Job Posting for a Copepod Collector

They were looking for someone to round up a thousand,  
and I was their girl. Who else but me, with my degrees in tear-

shaped bodies, in heartlessness? What else would I need  
but a bucket, a low-tech fish net, a set of close-up-

and-personal eyes, what else but my reverential respect  
for the exoskeleton-ed? My plan: explain my penchant

for leaf litter, hydrothermal vents, my endless pursuit  
of all things ephemeral—gone tomorrow puddles

and ponds, temporarily damp moss, the water-filled recesses  
of bromeliads and pitcher plants, intertidal splash pools.

I know it would be a daily drop-to-my-knees situation  
attempting to catch a glimpse of those four antennae

(two long, two exceedingly small), to witness the miraculous  
sussing of predator versus prey via analysis of flowing water;

I know as I cozied up with one of Earth's most sturdy creatures,  
my life would become, like theirs, a lesson in absorption,

in transparency, which is why I'm a shoe-in, especially  
when I tell them it's a job like any other—repairing

cracked water mains, sweeping popcorn from the aisles—  
requiring focus on the fact of a single eye, the realization

we're all bio-indicators, exposing the havoc our tampering's  
wreaking on existing populations. I'm the right person,

I'll tell them, because I'm drawn to sinkholes and streambeds,  
to the gelid and the deeply benthic, because I've a fondness

for cephalic appendages like tiny oars, because I'm smitten  
by their lickety-split high-tailing it out of a pickle, making

like Houdini when confronted with the squish of my rain boots.



## ABOUT MARTHA SILANO

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Martha Silano is the author of *Reckless Lovely* (Saturnalia Books 2014), *The Little Office of the Immaculate Conception* (Saturnalia Books 2011), and with Kelli Russell Agodon *The Daily Poet: Day-By-Day Prompts For Your Writing Practice* (Two Sylvias Press 2013). Her work has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *North American Review*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Orion*, and *Ecotone*. She received an MFA from the University of Washington and lives in Seattle, where she is an English instructor and magazine editor. She serves as the poetry editor for *Crab Creek Review* and is the curator of Beacon Bards, a monthly poetry reading series in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. She can be found online at *Blue Positive* ([bluepositive.blogspot.com](http://bluepositive.blogspot.com)).

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