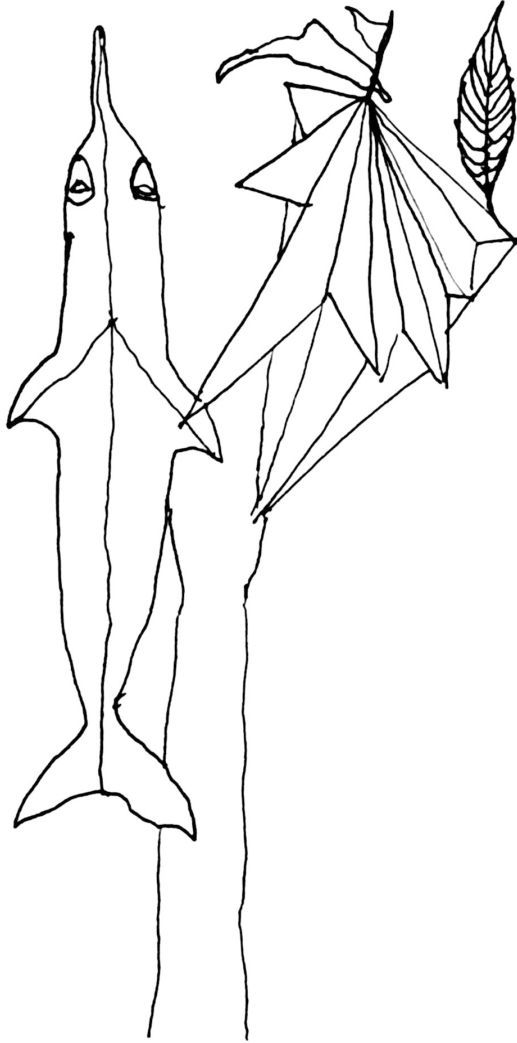


GREEN DOLPHIN



We do not know for certain if this dolphin was once called Basildon. We were given a letter from England with that name and its portrait inside.

Sighted numerous times in Madeira Island by those we don't know. Phosphorescent. The skin was found being worn by some kids around the outskirts of Caniçal.

We now call it Phoenix of the Sea: a green dolphin, agile and speedy as a match on fire.

Phoenix loved to confront the fizzy saliva of the sea jaws over the earth, flying over the gazes of whoever would pass by.

It is said that Phoenix appeared to those of the same size, but reports refer to both giants and children. One guesses Phoenix was chameleonic. Appearing only to the ones that were complementary. In these encounters the morphology would merge, detonating a route of transformations and then disappearing.

The head had a protective rudeness. It is no coincidence that we swim forward. Phoenix stared without indecision, the eyes were warm and empty. The dorsal - two curves - a vertebral tunnel. Through the fins a black sole dissolved infinitely as roots of volcanic smoke.

Phoenix would be thrilled with other beings that, among gales of laughter, would share their presence. As far as we know, there was a curious lizard that meandered colorfully through many lives; the poet spider whose webs jingled refrains; a young cat that sharpened affection; and the fallow deer from the north, hard to reach, that would double surfaces as it licked them and inverted them to the open hearts.

All of these had their flesh tattooed with the green blood of the dolphin, which would vitally show up on Phoenix's own skin in coagulant hiccups. Sometimes the tattoos shined and at those times the stars inflated.

The biggest fact of Phoenix's existence is the look of others with whom paths crossed, which would then turn empty and warm as their own. We could see Phoenix through the eyes of others.

The story that Dona Rita told us is probably the most revealing of all. It is about a fisherman, Raúl, that every day would hoist a shell on his back and go down the hill towards south. From the first step, ramp off, he would greedily look at the sea with the aim of a hunter. Raúl had a fine humor but his old laziness turned him quite sulky. And there he was, twitching lightly through the arched bone walls and panting every five counted steps. He had raised eyebrows and a sleepy smile. As usual, once he arrived at the water's edge he laid the shell and turned it upside down. Swinging forward, hands steady - oup! - the body fell into place and he started to sail. Raúl wore a nylon thread on his index finger and a bottle of sweet oil with which he impregnated the ruse, a tiny harpoon on the tip. He thus spent about three hours waiting for something to bite. Nothing. He rambled a conversation with a wee blue dragon that was swaying on the harpoon by the balance of Raúl's finger transferring the waves. They spoke about luck, about what has been lived and what was in store to be lived.

Raúl came back to land in torment. He was feeling as though he shared the dragon's dimension against his own existence. He was sure of his ineptness to carry the shell back, up the hill.

He wanted to give up and felt ashamed. In case someone was watching him, Raúl shrunk and hid inside the crust. Without strength, invisible. From time to time, he would stretch the skeleton - feeling the breeze outside - but no more than that. It is said that the fisherman stayed there for days, maybe weeks, given the dry state of his body.

Raúl was found at home. The shell in the sea. Dehydrated. Still alive, he was breathing calmly as a buoy on the surface. His eyes were green beyond their natural color. He looked at everything and nothing at the same time, without disturbance regardless of concentration. His eyebrows descended very close to the eyelids and the smile began to be drawn with the inspiration.

Never again - Raúl threw himself into the ocean with the shell, which, in fact, remained with Dona Rita along with other found objects that empowered an inexplicable resolution of things.

Raúl's forearm had a tattoo. Two stars above, as one would say, and another star, solitarily, below.

From within the sea, life's spectrum overturns inside out. Silence is full. Echo is the first word. Perspective unfolds in spherical quadrants from the water line to the guts of observation.

If all the consciousnesses could resonate the green dolphin's serenity. A voice transversal to the stars, from the celestial universe of composition(s).

The island rises and thus draws the horizon, two points of temporal and spatial cohesion between light and water. A circle. And there are still those who see everything straight...

Three generations have passed since the last reference to Phoenix. We do not know if they died or traveled to other seas. Maybe they took off to other spaces.

The skin found in Caniçal doesn't necessarily mean death and skinning. We consider the possibility that, from time to time, Phoenix (or Basildon, or...) changes their skin to renew the veil of memories.

Indifference is a gift bore only by immortals.