

## SEAGULLS IN THE CITY

Emily Shaffer\*

They came when I called them,  
Salt smell on the air,  
A whisper of the ocean wind  
Blowing through my hair,  
Gray dawn in the city,  
Birds' cries overhead,  
The wind took my sea-salt dreams  
And brought them to me instead.  
Snowdrifts on the sidewalk—  
Winter's first decree,  
White birds soar around me—  
Visitors from the sea,  
A seashell in my pocket,  
Talisman on my chain,  
The waves calling out to me,  
Singing their sweet refrain.  
I've got to get out of this city,  
Return me to my home,  
I'm drowning here in the city,  
Among cold steel and chrome.  
My eyes follow the seagulls  
Circling up above,  
"Take me away," my heart cries,  
"Back to the sea I love!"  
Is this exile over?  
Have you come back for me?  
Or am I bound here forever  
In this dark eternity?  
The seagulls' cries are my answer,  
The ocean wind, my prayer,  
My name called on the ocean waves,  
I breathe the salty air,  
The salt tears sting my eyes,  
As I cry out in pain,  
I fall on the windswept sand  
And hear that sweet old refrain.  
I pray to the gods and angels,  
The waves caress my skin,  
I lie down in my ocean  
And let it take me back in.

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\* **EMILY SHAFFER** grew up in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and has been writing poetry, fiction, plays, and essays since she was ten. She has an MFA in film production from Boston University and has worked in publishing and film in New York. She is currently co-writing a script and writes book reviews on young adult fiction for several websites. She has lived in Israel, London, and France, but considers home to be New York City.