

From the Cityread writing workshop at Highgate Library
Story inspired by 'Sea Sentinel', linocut with caustic etch print by
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Written by SB Chinn



In the days when I thought sand was yellow and the sky blue and the sea another blue, we went every year to the same house on the coast. A long trip, hot and sticky. And all year I dreamed of it -yellow and blue.

This year it felt different. My crayons melted and were unsatisfactory. The wind blew sand. The mossy rocks were slippery underfoot. There were patterns in the air on foggy mornings. I felt uneasy, waiting for something.

Someone gave me a paintbox, but the washed-out colours did not catch the look of the sand or the sea. I was doing nothing on the beach there -not able to go back to paddling and not ready to explore. Just waiting.

The days gobbled up our time. I began to get up early and go to the beach. There were shadows on the rocks that seemed to be itching to be seen. I took colouring pencils and drew and drew.

He came clear one misty morning, when the air patterns were caves cloudy in the sky. The tide was far out, uncovering more rocks than before. And there he was, perched on a rounded boulder, snout in the air, peering around.

Calm with excitement, I stayed utterly still. Only my hand secretly silently drew him as he surveyed his patch of beach. Looking down, I saw that my picture was all wrong. Nothing could capture him as he balanced sturdily there in his feathery suit and sniffed the air. There was a smell of bacon and I was hungry, so I turned for home and let him melt away. I'd come back tomorrow with better pencils, other paints, and capture him, I thought.

And I did. But he never came again. He was unbelievable and I had only my onehanded picture for proof. I never said anything. No one noticed how quiet I was.

He never came again, that year or the next. But I did not forget. I dream of him still, on the yellow sand by the blue blue sea.