



**NAUTILUS LIVE**  
OCEAN EXPLORATION TRUST

# Deep-Sea Oddities

*Poetry and other Whimsy*



*Written by Jessica Sandoval*  
*Illustrated by Jessica & Melissa Sandoval*

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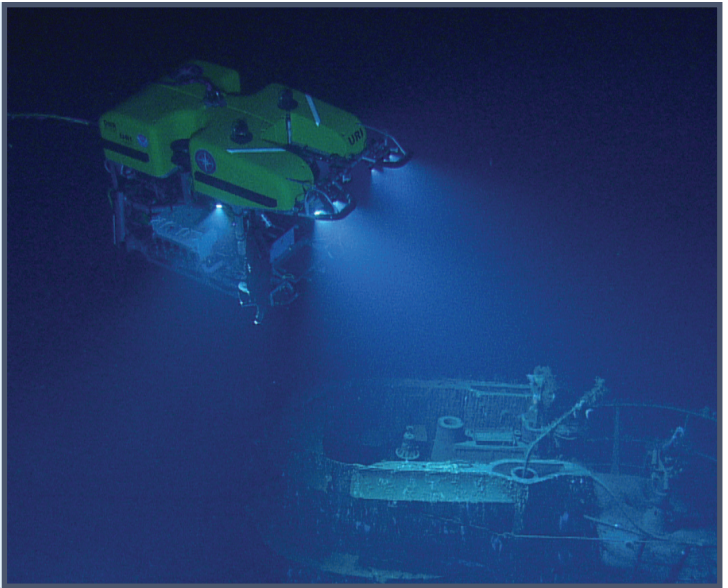
# All Aboard E/V Nautilus!



**Splash into the depths and come explore the ocean with us through *poetry*...**

The ocean is filled with wonderfully wacky creatures and stunning seascapes. It is home to worms that wear lipstick and crabs that sport mohawks. Yes, down here life seems upside down and quite strange. Our explorations of the ocean have inspired poems about the curious creatures and places we encounter in our adventures. Let's take a look at ocean exploration through the lens of the silly...

*Our team uses deep-sea submarines to explore the bottom of the ocean. With technology, we can shine light on the mysteries of the deep.*



*It takes teamwork to explore, with each person bringing creativity, skills, and passion. We are scientists, engineers, mariners, teachers, and artists who all come together to explore the ocean.*

## **Setting Sail**

Nowhere becomes somewhere,  
Somewhere from nowhere.  
A whole lot of something,  
From nothing at all.

We sail with great care  
To both here and there,  
One drop in the ocean,  
One ship so small...





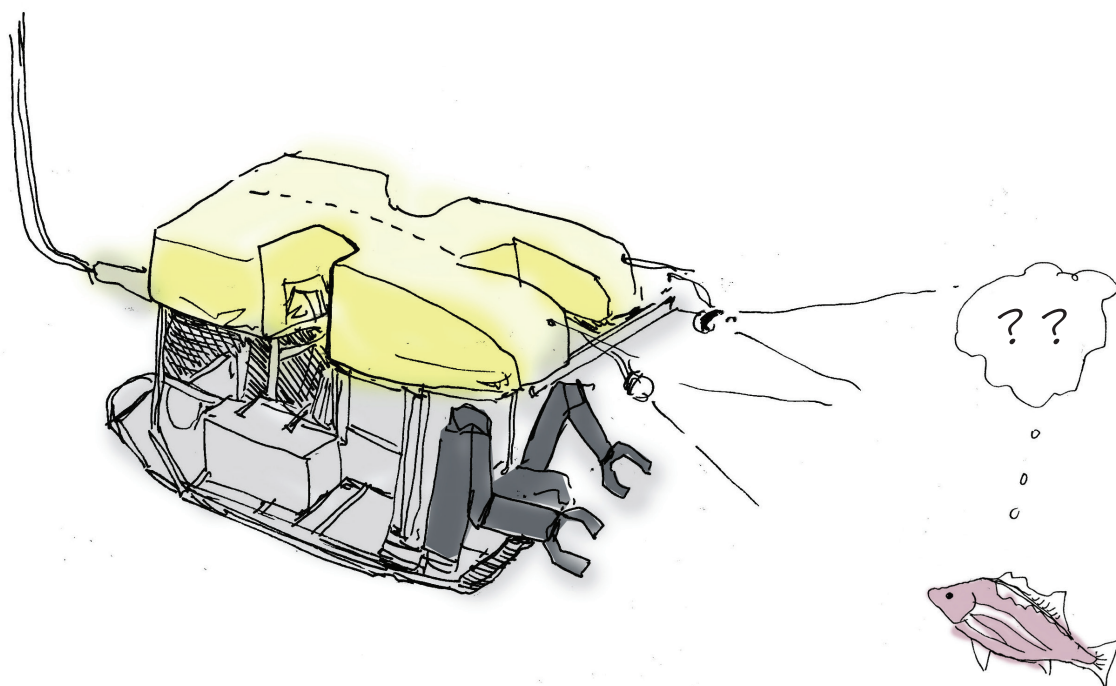
# A fish's impression of a submarine

What is this weird fish? It's like a bright yellow box,  
That has two arms and likes to eat rocks!  
It moves quite slow and has a large tail,  
That is long and dangly but thin and frail.

It has one big eye and eight other small,  
And in a current it barely even swims at all!  
It won't talk but yells in high-pitched screams,  
And lets out a weird light of many bright beams.

It waddles along with six oddly shaped fins,  
And has two mouths with two square-shaped chins.  
It bumps into boulders and hops when it lands,  
And lets out a feeding tube in order to slurp sand!

And where it comes from, no other fish knows.  
But, *oh, wait a minute!* Up it swims! Up it goes!  
Away swims the fish, the weirdest I've ever seen,  
A species of fish we all call "submarine."





Let's be honest, a submarine is a strange looking fish! A Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) is a type of submersible. It looks to be a metal box with arms, and we use it to explore the depths of the ocean! Let's meet one...

## ROV Hercules

Max Depth: 4,000 meters

### Lights

Illuminate the dark deep sea

### Thrusters

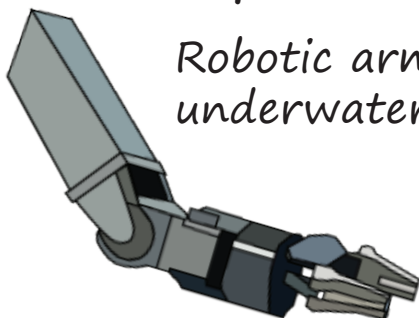
Propel the ROV through the water

### Camera

Image the bizarre underwater world

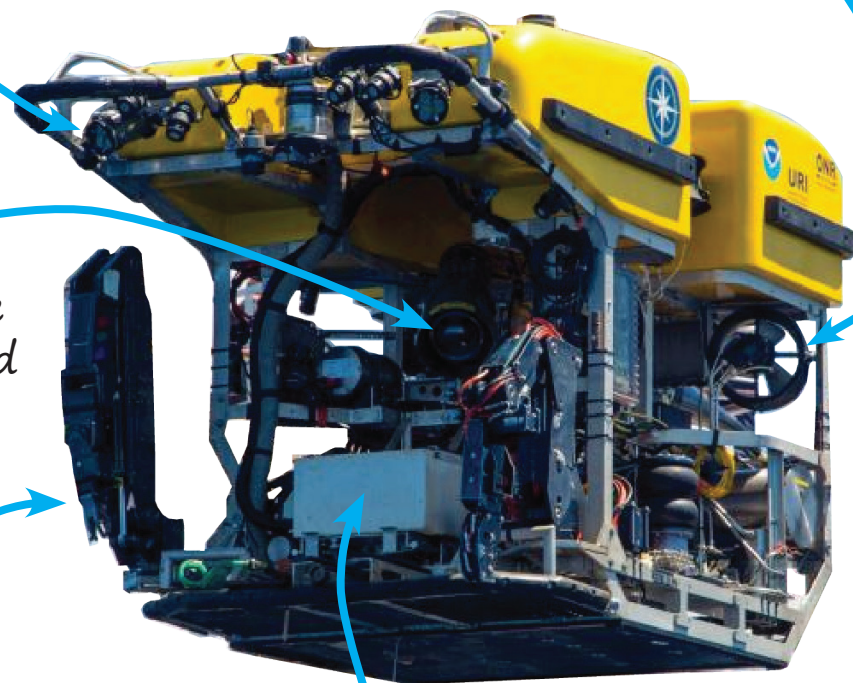
### Manipulators

Robotic arms for underwater grabbing



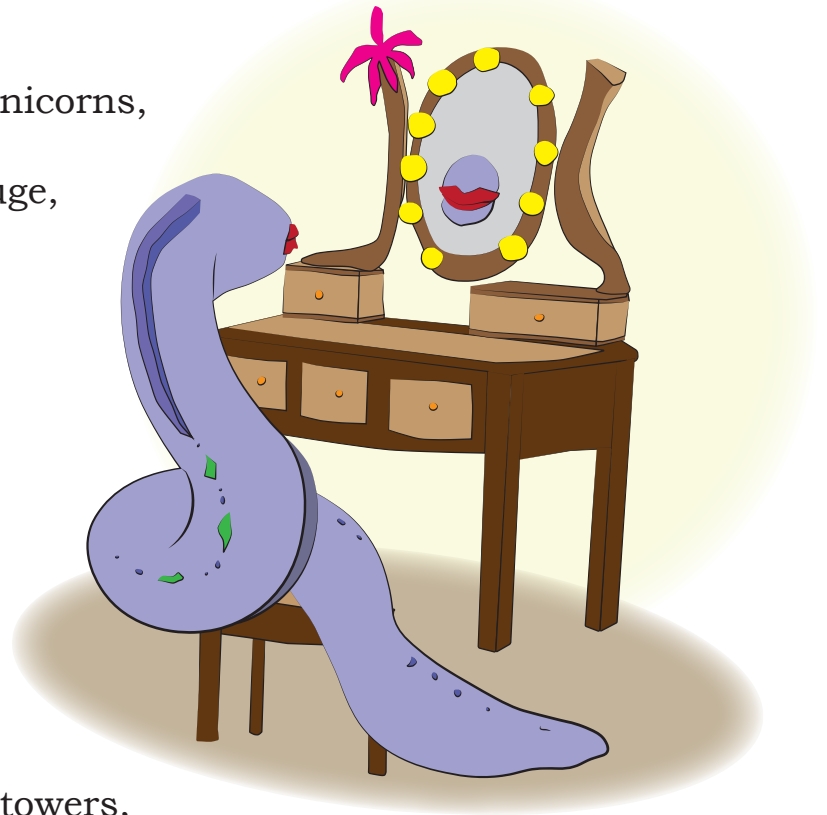
### Biobox

Stores the samples that we collect

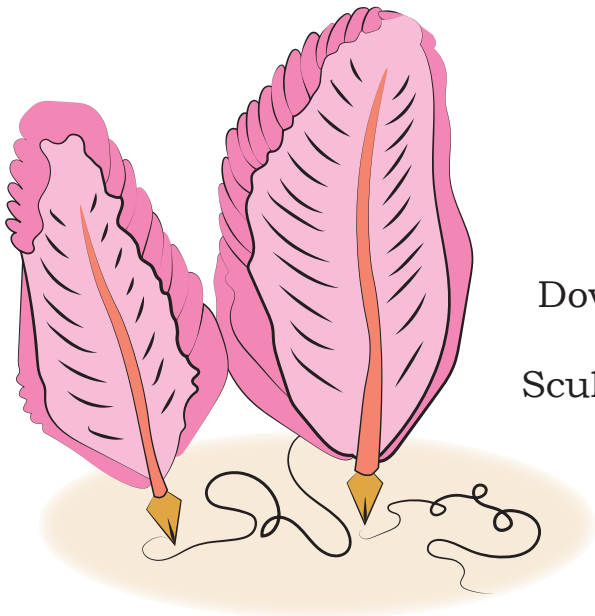


# A World of the Strange

Down here live dragons and unicorns,  
And here pigs really do fly.  
Worms paint their lips in red rouge,  
And fish can see with no eyes.

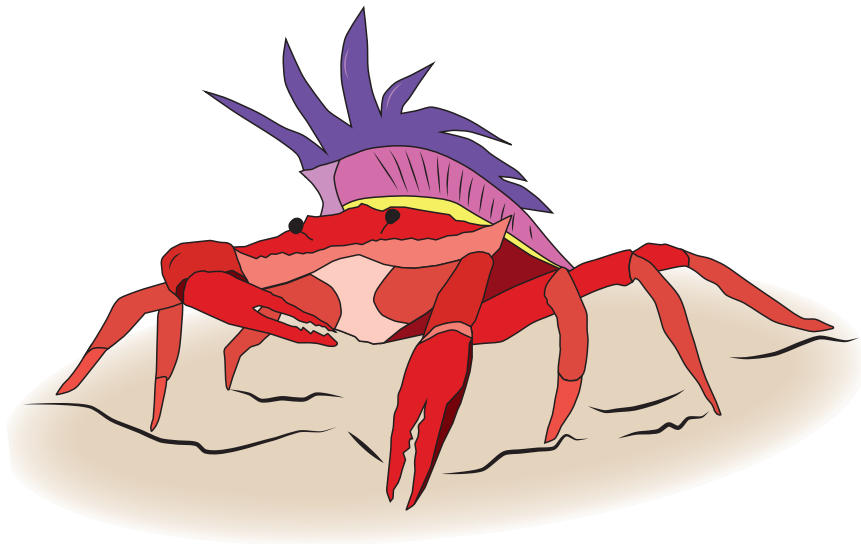


Down here live shrimps in glass towers,  
And worms feast on buffets of sand.  
Scorpions boast their large bushy moustaches,  
And corals give high fives with dozens of hands.



Down here live forests of sponges and feathers,  
And rocks listen with large hairy ears.  
Sculptures are crafted of the finest bubble gum,  
And creatures live for hundreds of years.

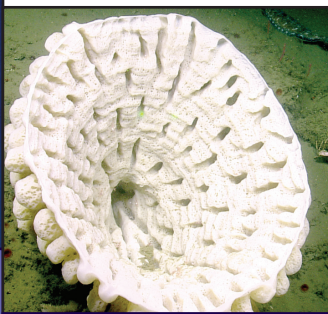
Down here live crabs with large mohawks,  
And sea stars tie their bodies into knots.  
Cucumbers are filled to the brim with jelly,  
And floating castles are built out of snot.



It's down here that no way is up,  
And life lives in opposites of what it seems it should be.  
The weird and the strange all live here together,  
Nine thousand feet down under the sea.



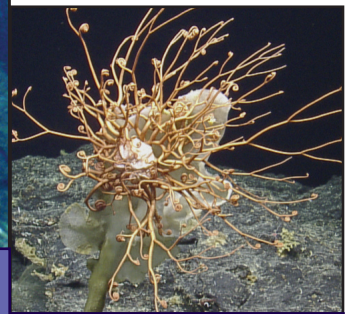
*Squid*



*Sponge*



*Sea Cucumber*



*Basket Star*

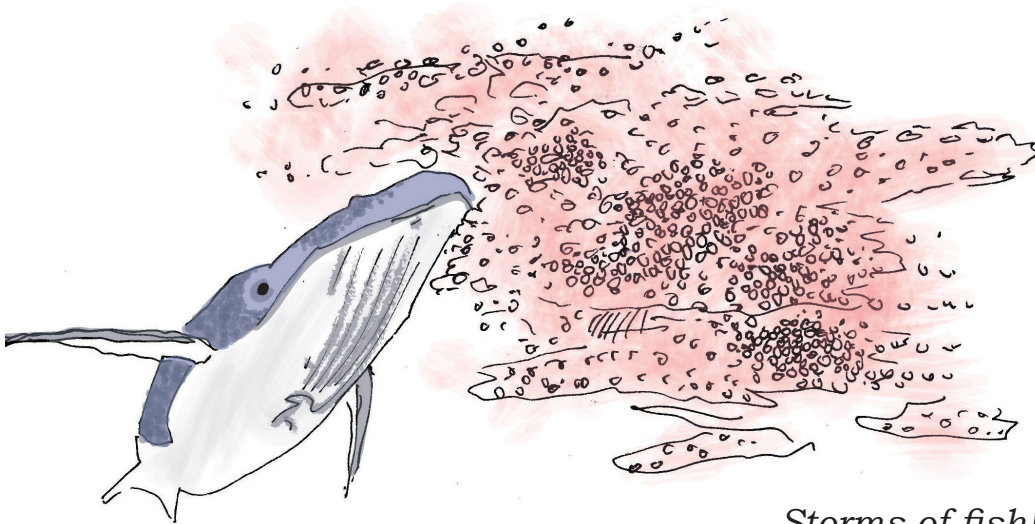


On the seafloor, we find a whole world of strange creatures. Animals live without light and under incredible pressures. The animals down here have adapted to this type of environment, so they may look a little strange!



# Subsea Storms

**S**torms of krill! Storms of krill!  
So thick that I can't see!  
Where I fly, I can't say  
Even what's in front of me!  
In the blizzard of their pink bodies,  
I squint but I can't tell,  
Which way's up or where I'm going  
As I tumble in the swell!  
And so I fly now even faster,  
Blinded by the krill.  
Looking left and looking right,  
Everything's pink *until*.....



Storms of fish! Storms of fish!  
Just as hungry as can be!  
Their silver bodies swarm the krill,  
But STILL I cannot see!  
But then in the distance, in the blue,  
A large shadow draws near.  
And within an instant of a gulp,  
They all just *disappear*.



At night in shallow waters, shrimp-like animals called *krill* are drawn to the lights of the ROV. That makes it a great feeding opportunity for hungry fish, or maybe even a whale!

# Free Cookies

A plate of cookies out on the table,  
Just sitting with no one around.  
I look up, whose cookies are these?  
I wonder, but no owner is found.

So what to do with a plate full of cookies?  
Fattened, fluffy, such a mouthwatering sight.  
Looking around, and no one's near  
I open wide and take one big bite.

My face contorts with sheer horror.  
The filling is as oozy as can be!  
A plate full of cookies filled with mucus!  
It's no wonder these cookies are free.



Slime Star



Slime stars live on the seafloor, and look as tasty as a cookie. But these sea stars are filled with mucus to slime any hungry predators that were to take a bite!



Many deep sea animals use slime to defend themselves from predators. One of the most (in)famous slime makers is the hagfish! This fish can make gallons of slime in seconds to ward off hungry predators!



Hagfish  
(in its sponge home)

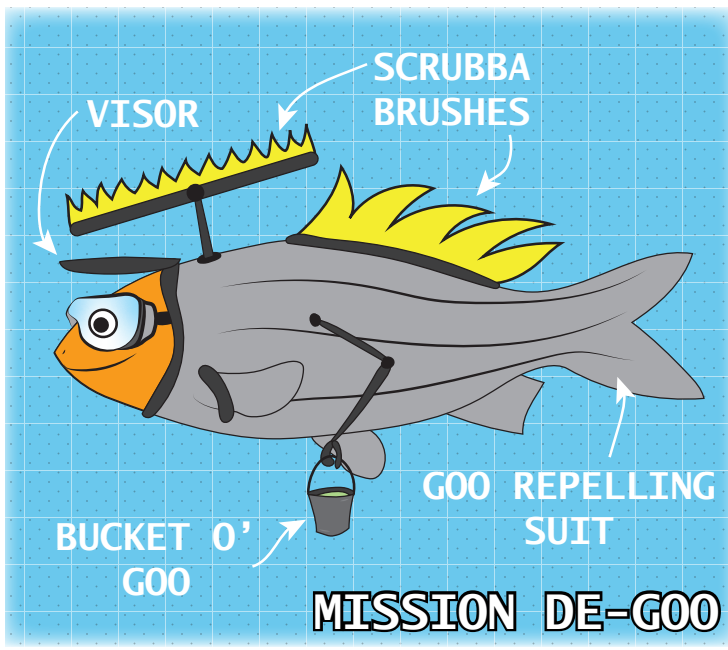
# Henry, the Hagfish

My friend Henry is a hagfish,  
And he's the cuddliest of them all.  
He longs so badly to give a hug,  
But no one will go near him at all!  
Henry has a little problem,  
That when he hugs each and every time,  
He leaves you drenched from head to toe  
In buckets worth of slime!  
And poor Henry feels so bad you see,  
But he doesn't know what to do!  
For he is just a lonely hagfish,  
Which is best at oozing goo.



Henry has lost so many friends,  
Since he slimes them with every hug.  
There is no way to stop the oozing,  
Not a switch nor a plug.  
And his slime is so sticky and stinky,  
It at first scared even me away!  
Until I had a bright idea  
And ran to the workshop one day.





I made myself a goo-proof suit  
 To cover my hair down to my toes,  
 And swam over to Henry's house,  
 Down where the sponge field grows.  
 There on his door step in my suit,  
 I eagerly embraced my slippery friend.  
 Henry smiled from gill to gill.  
 His excitement had no end!

And even though he oozes slime,  
 I do not mind anymore.  
 My goosuit covers me from head to toe,  
 So the slime just floats to the floor.  
 Now all of his friends have crafted goosuits.  
 Henry is cuddle-filled and carefree.  
 By giving hugs to all of his friends,  
 He is the happiest hagfish in the sea.



Since a hagfish can produce so much slime, would *you* hug a hagfish?



# The Handy Tree

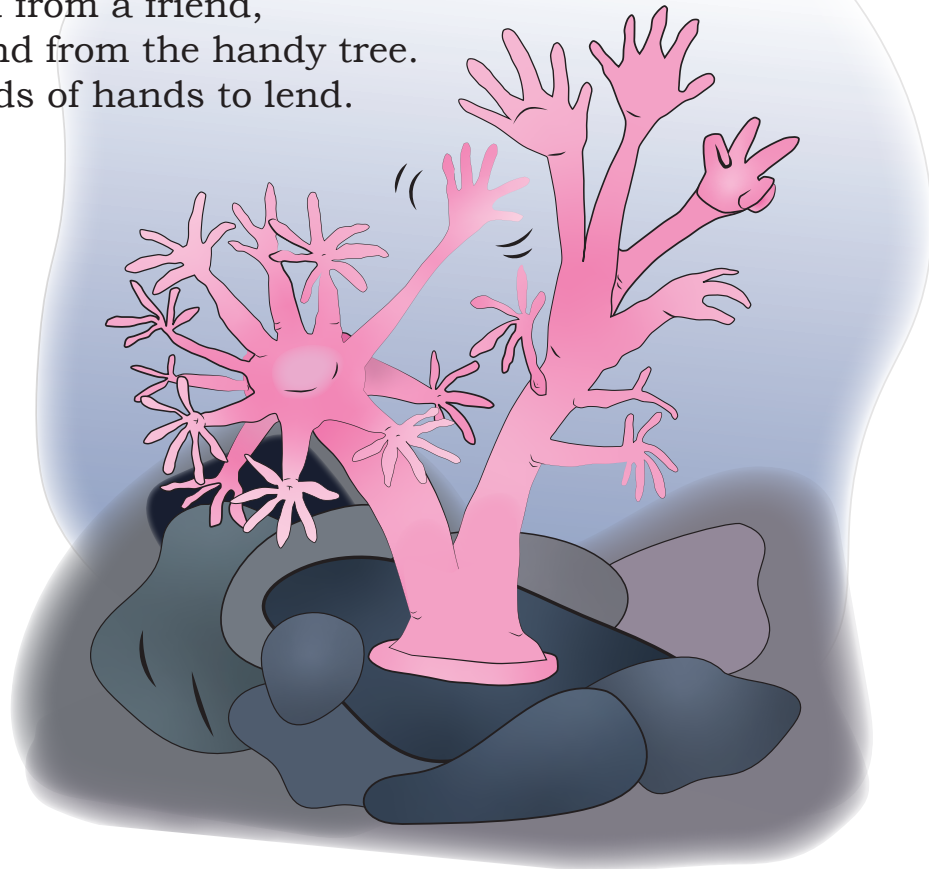
Here grows quite a handy tree,  
A tree with thousands of hands!  
Some give high fives to the fishes.  
Some wave at you right where it stands.

Yes, some like to snap their fingers.  
Some applause with a clap,  
And some hands get quite angry  
And flail around ready to slap!

Some hands like to play games  
And make shadow puppets in the breeze.  
Some hands like to give handshakes,  
With a large and heavy-handed squeeze.

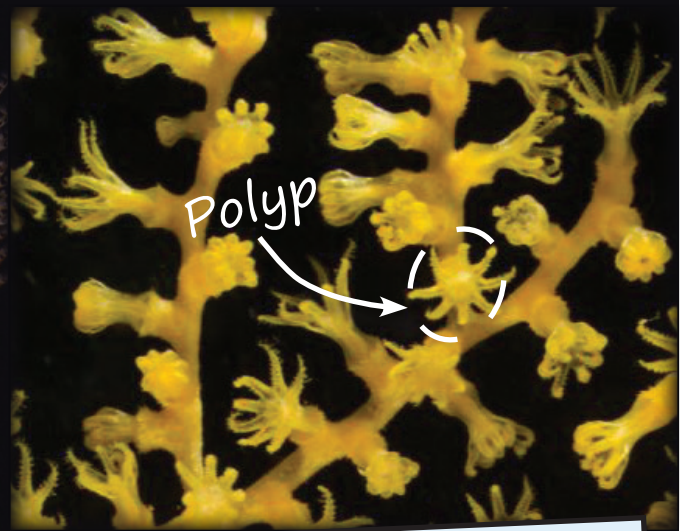
And the neatest thing about this tree,  
That lives on the seafloor,  
That all hands can divide into more hands!  
And grow more hands! More and more!

So if you ever are in need of a hand,  
A helping hand from a friend,  
Come get a hand from the handy tree.  
It has thousands of hands to lend.



# Corals

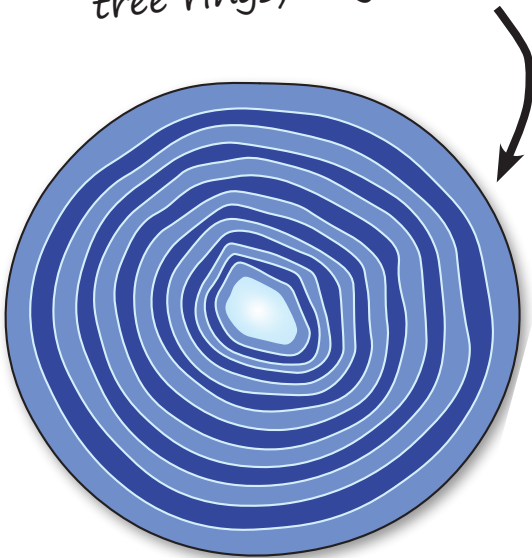
Firecracker  
Coral



Corals live at the bottom of the ocean. A coral is actually a colony of thousands of small animals, called **polyps**. These polyps look like little hands which grab food that blows by in the current.

## Did you know?!

Deep-sea corals can live for thousands of years! When scientists sample a coral, they can count its growth rings (which are much like tree rings) to guess its age!

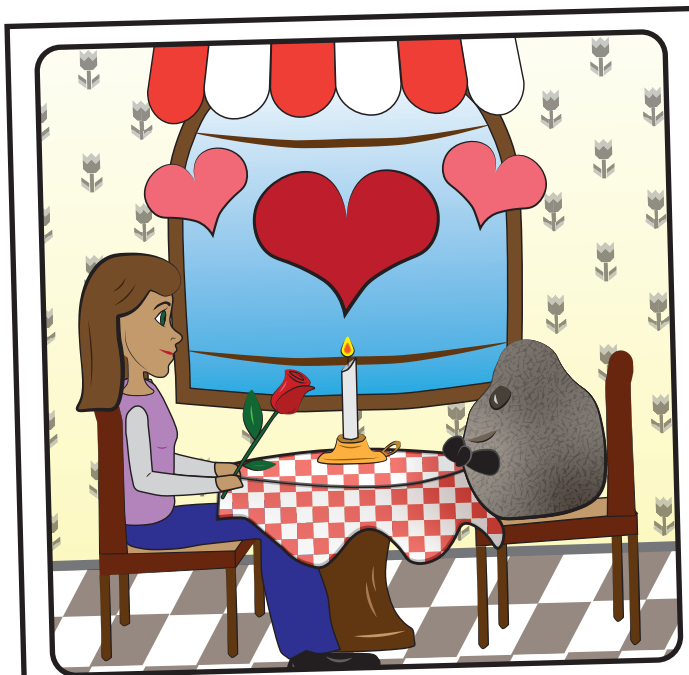


This is one old coral! It has acted as the home to deep-sea critters for millenia!

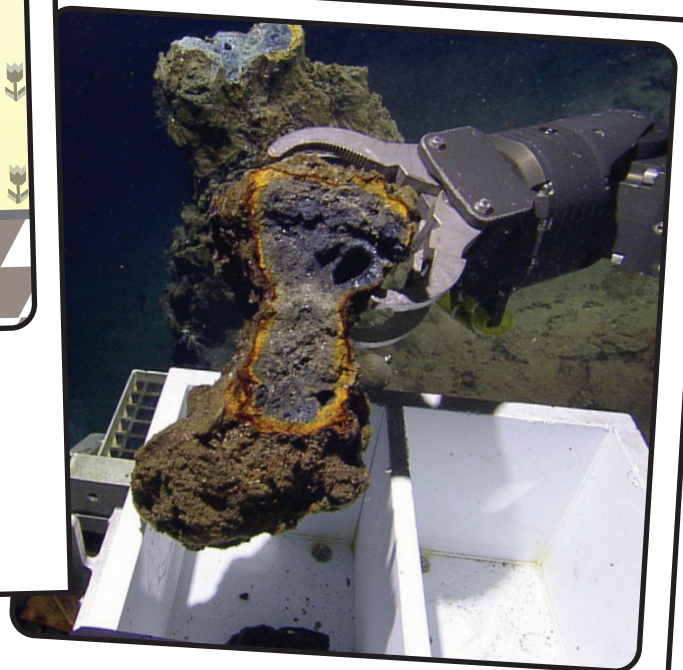
# Geologists

When we go out to dinner,  
He says not a word.  
He stares and stares,  
But not an utterance is heard.  
He is slow with everything,  
Slow to move and slow to dance.  
And he most times runs 'round naked,  
As he does not wear any pants.

He is stubborn, hard-headed,  
And at times can be gruff.  
He is bumpy and cold,  
And on the outside quite rough.  
But I confess that I love him,  
Though he does not even talk.  
But such is the life of love,  
When you date a rock.



*Geologists date rocks scientifically to determine their age. But, let's face it, they also sure do love rocks!*

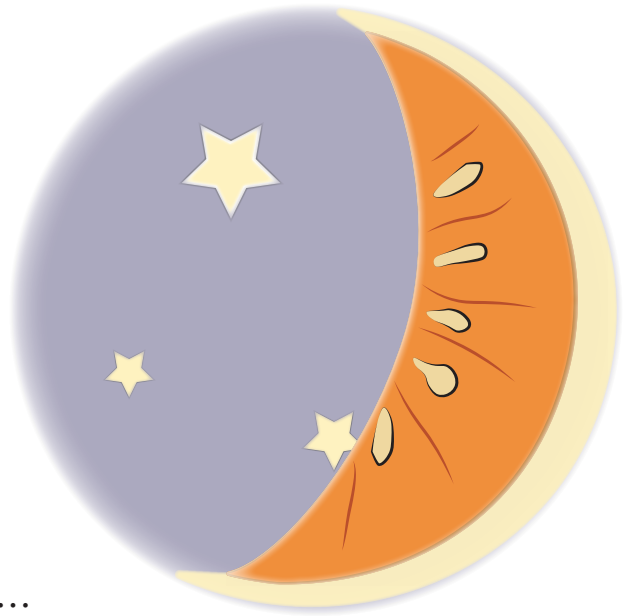


*Using a manipulator, we sample rocks from the seafloor for scientists to study. A geologist's dream!*



# Tangerine Moon

The clouds just ate the moon  
in four large fluffy bites.  
They must've thought it citrus  
for its bright orange light.  
Or perhaps up there the moon  
does smell of a tangerine?  
Delectably delicious citrus  
with a powdered sugar sheen.  
A tasty treat to the clouds  
as they could resist no more,  
And after such longing, they took a nibble...  
then *two, three, and four!*



And now, alas, the sky hangs dark,  
save for the stars,  
That are radiant and bright  
and thankfully quite far  
From the reach of the stomachs  
of the hungry fluffy clouds,  
That would nibble at the stars no doubt  
and of their light would shroud.

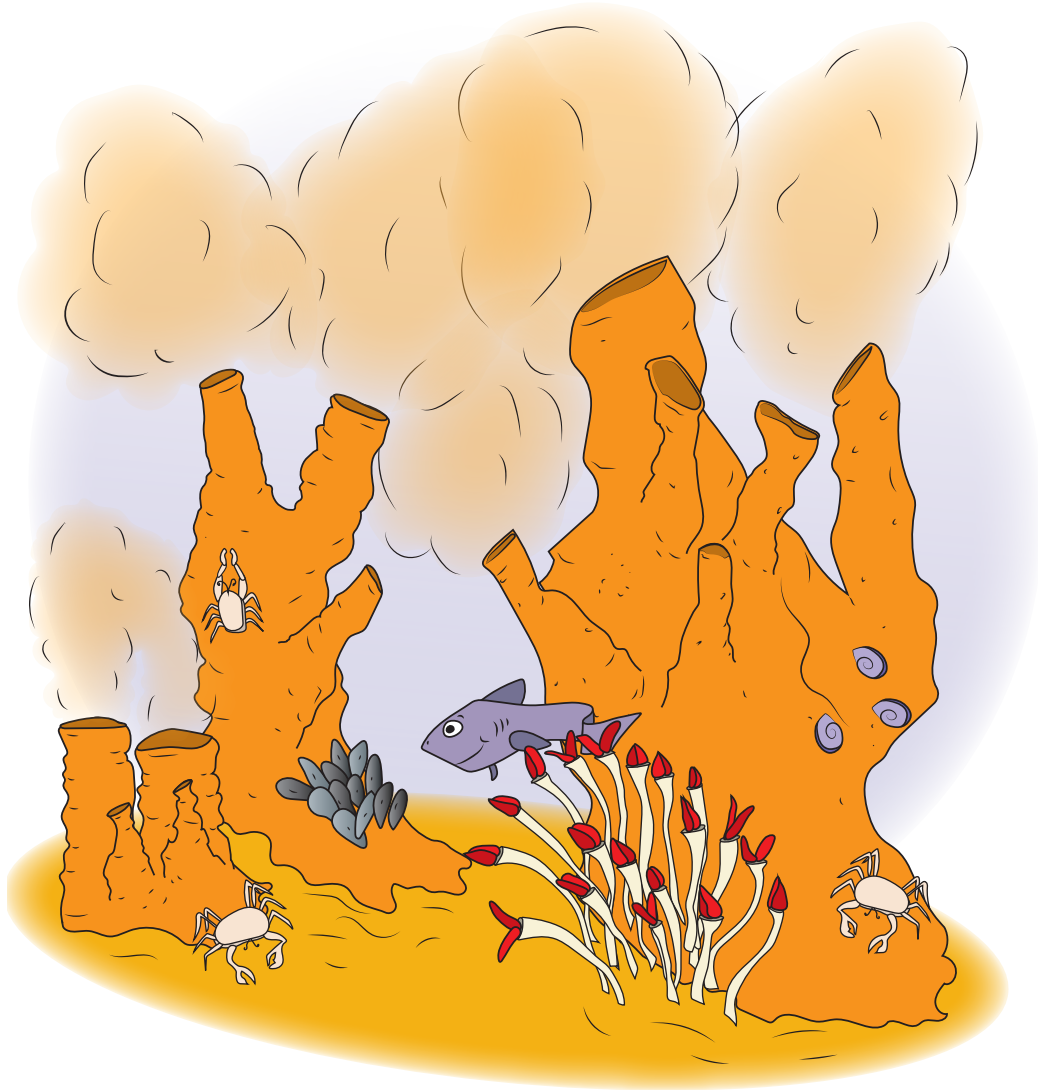
But, wait, what is that I see  
appearing before my eyes?  
The moon now reemerges  
and in the sky begins to rise!  
So if the clouds ate the moon,  
of this I have no doubt,  
Does this mean that the moon I see  
was actually *spit* back out?!

Now it hangs there in the sky  
with a slightly slobbery sheen.  
I guess the moon wasn't as tasty  
as an orange tangerine.



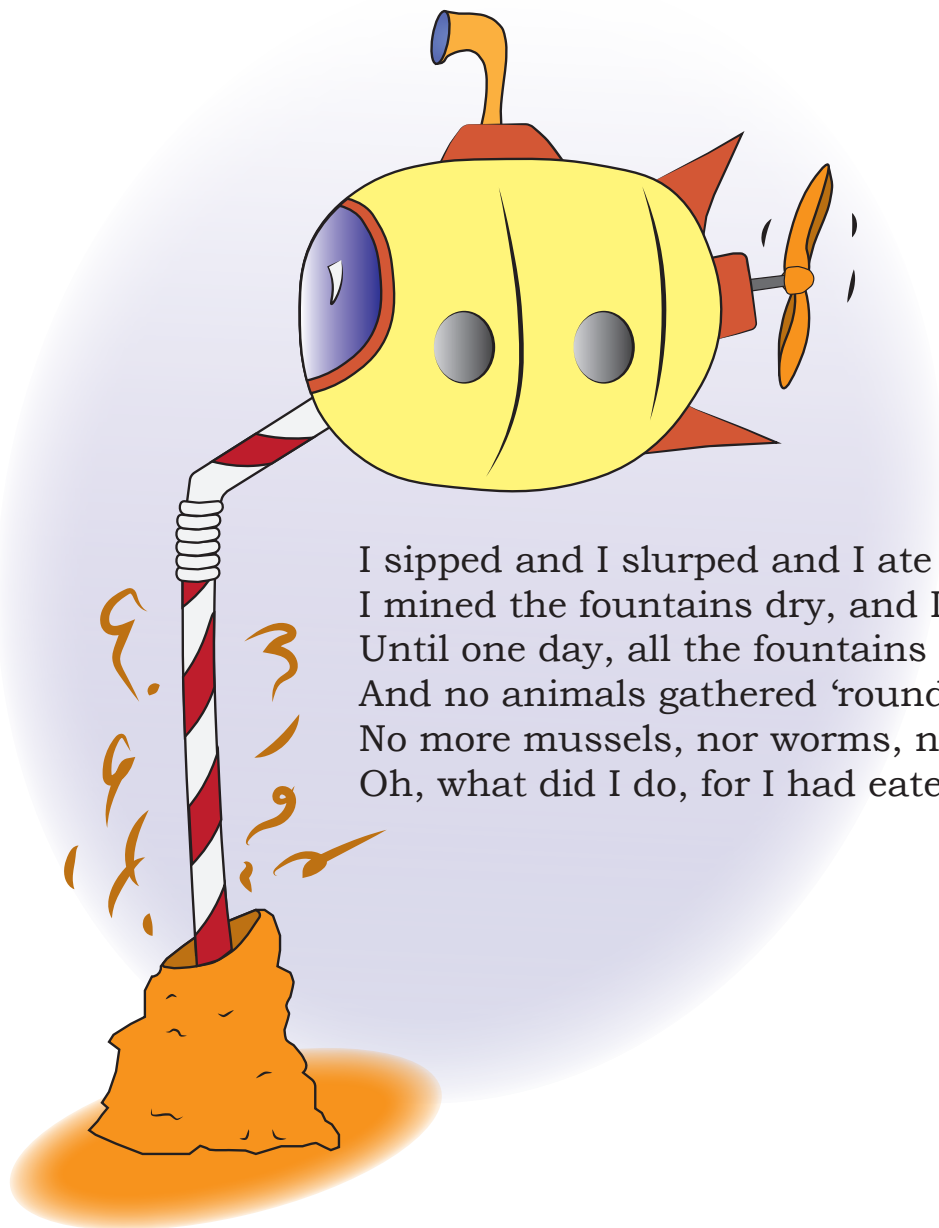
# Deep-Sea Cheese Fountains

Deep down on the seafloor stands tall cheese spouts,  
Bright orange towers with molten cheese oozing out.  
Spanning over miles extend these great cheese fountains,  
That build up over time individual cheddar mountains!



You see, the tastiest of cheeses bubbles up from here,  
Attracting the animals of oceans far and near.  
The mussels, the worms, the crabs, and many more,  
All come to feast from the cheddar of the seafloor.  
Taking sips with wispy feathers or pinching at it with claws,  
Or drinking from the cheddar with little feeding straws.  
All the animals love the cheese, but I did not know why.  
So I hopped in a submarine to give the cheese a try.

Down I descended, down to the cheese mountains,  
And took a taste of the cheddar that boiled up from the fountains.  
The sweetest and saltiest and smoothest of cheese,  
The best tasting cheddar across the seven seas.  
All the cheese! Imagine it! All the cheese you can eat!  
For every sandwich! Every nacho! Oh, what a treat!  
I filled bags full of cheese down from the seafloor!  
I craved the cheese. I loved it! I wanted more! *MORE!*

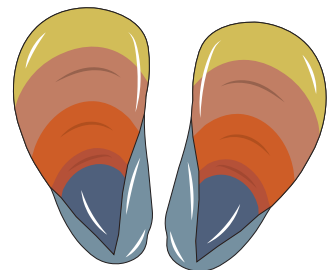
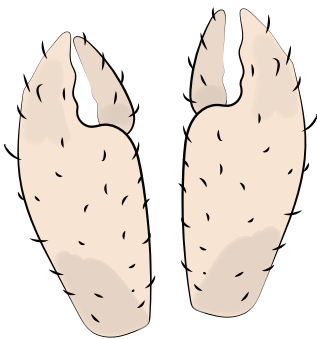


I sipped and I slurped and I ate away in my submarine.  
I mined the fountains dry, and I ate them clean!  
Until one day, all the fountains ran clear,  
And no animals gathered 'round from seas far and near.  
No more mussels, nor worms, nor crabs, big or small.  
Oh, what did I do, for I had eaten it all!

So I searched and I searched all day and all night,  
No cheese to be seen, not a fountain in sight.  
Until I spotted it! From way up in my submarine,  
Down on the seafloor shimmered a cheesy orange sheen.  
I had found it! The ittiest and bittiest of the tasty cheddar fountains,  
That surely must one day grow into a large cheddar mountain.  
Hopeful and eager, I cared for this little spout,  
As it grew by the inches from the cheddar it spewed out.



Slowly it grew back, this wondrous cheddar mound,  
With the tastiest of cheeses to flow up from the ground.  
And with that one, more spouts began to flow!  
And clumps of other mountains began to regrow!  
One by one they came back, from the mussels to the fishes,  
All craving the best tasting of sea-salted dinner dishes.  
Once again, the cheddar fountains all came alive.  
The cheese flowed strong, and the animals thrived.



With my mission now done, I flew away,  
But I learned quite the lesson that day, I would say.  
For it was best to take a taste, but a taste and no more,  
For we all must share the cheddar of the seafloor.

Although, I most certainly still visit  
And take a *SMALL* sip of cheese,  
For it is the best tasting cheddar across the seven seas.

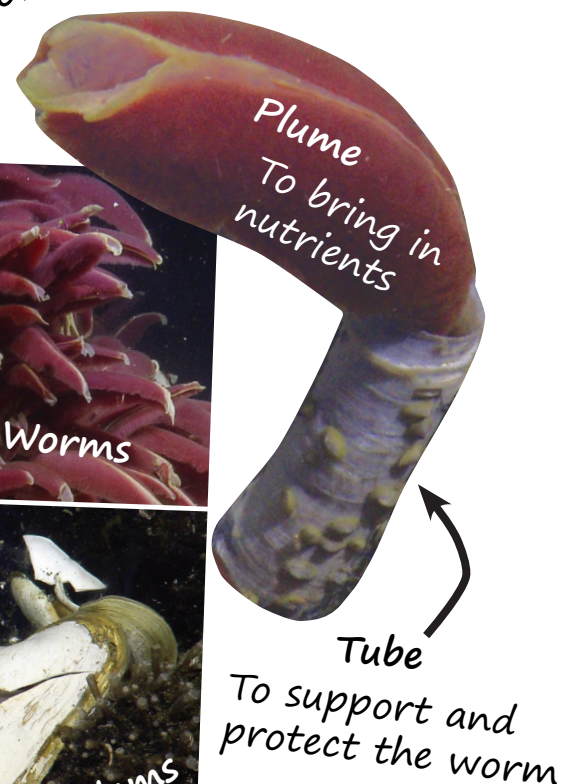


We dove on fields of **hydrothermal vents**! These vents look like big chimneys that spew out mineral-rich boiling water (not cheese)! As the hot water cools, the minerals settle like rain, helping to build the chimney!

## Hydrothermal Vents

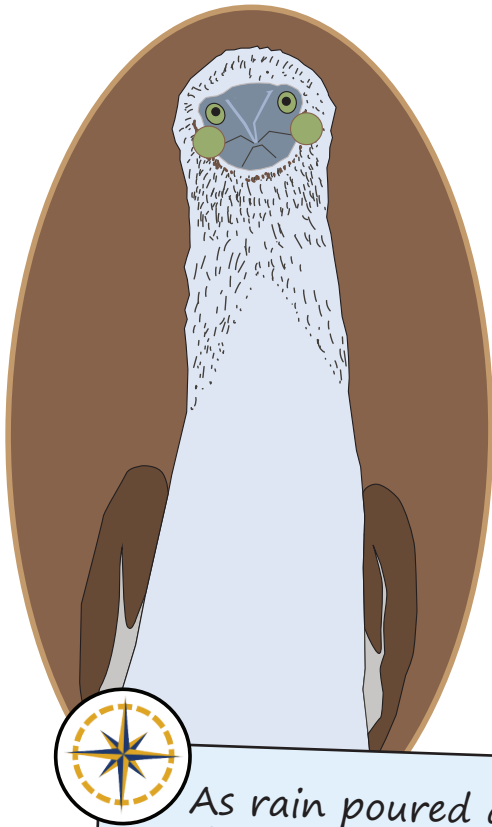


Vents are home to many animals...





# Seasick Seabirds



Seasick seabirds blown in by the storm,  
Their blue feet fluttering about.  
They crash land with a *thump* in gulps of rain,  
And when you go near, they holler and shout.

Seasick seabirds had feasted on fishes,  
Their stomachs full and well-fed.  
So as you go to help them to the sky,  
You'd best better guard your head!

For seasick seabirds retaking flight  
Are now motion sick, hovering in air.  
Seabird seasick rains down in a storm.  
Well, so much for freshly cleaned hair.

As rain poured down onto the ship during a storm, so did  
a bunch of birds! Birds get seasick when they land on ships.  
So, when you help them back to the sky, watch your head!  
Otherwise, you may find your hair full of fish guts!



Atolls in the South Pacific Ocean are perfect nesting grounds for seabirds. Sticking only a few feet out of the ocean, these sandy flats are home to millions of seabirds!

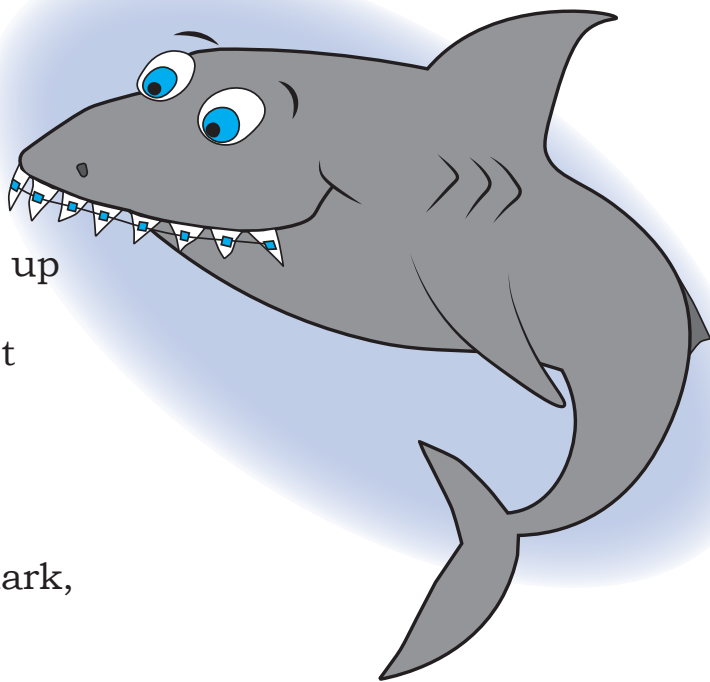
# Shark Smiles

Oh, to be that shark's orthodontist!  
He grows teeth nearly out the gill!  
One tooth falls out, the row goes crooked,  
And yet he wants them straightened still?!

But how to line up all the teeth?  
He loses a thousand teeth a year!  
That all fall off and get caught up  
In the metal alignment gear!

Then, like a wheel, a new tooth rolls up  
To replace the one before.  
And back he goes to the orthodontist  
To refit his braces once more.

But, oh, to be his orthodontist!  
Of all of the fish in the sea!  
To try to straighten the teeth of a shark,  
What a headache that would be!



*Sharks lose tens of thousands of teeth over  
their lifetime! At least they don't have to  
worry about brushing their teeth!*





## Pillow Lava

When the day is spent and doings are done,  
When the deep-sea creatures have all had their fun,  
The fishes and shrimps and sharks and many more,  
All head for the pillows  
Glued to the seafloor.

But these pillows aren't like the ones that we know,  
For they are stiff and hard and rest so far below.  
But they are just right for the creatures to lay their heads,  
As they settle in for the night  
On their deep-seafloor beds.

And although there's no light this far deep,  
The critters, if they have them, close their eyes and fall asleep.  
And the ocean awakens in an orchestra of snores,  
That all stem from the pillows  
Glued to the seafloor.



But as they snore, they all snore so perfectly in key,  
And form a sleepy choir of the deep sea.  
From the snorts to the grunts to the high-pitched squeals,  
They all add to the song,  
From the shrimps to the eels.

You see, they snore so loud, you can hear them for miles,  
With their many snored songs of many snored styles.  
A loud, boisterous orchestra of the grandest of snores,  
That all sound from the pillows  
Glued to the seafloor.



We dove on extinct underwater volcanoes across the Pacific Ocean. Next to them extended fields of **pillow lava** (long, pillow-shaped formations of lava)! Pillow lava is one of the most common geological features of the seafloor. That's something to snore on.



Pillow lava tubes extruded out like toothpaste

## BUSTIN' OUT!

Lava burst out of this pillow before it was cool!





# Lullaby of a Ship



My walls **thump**, and my walls *purr*.  
My ceilings *screech* and *shout* and *whir*.  
My room **thunders**,  
And floorboards *rattle*  
And at times sound of  
the **stomps** of cattle.  
Most things *creak*  
with every bend.  
These noises are so loud!  
They have no end!  
They all *chitter*  
and **chatter**  
and *sing* me to sleep.  
A lullaby of  
*rattles,*  
*stomps,*  
**hammers,**  
and *squeaks*.

# Drops in the Ocean

I count ten drops in that puddle,  
A hundred drops inside my cup.  
I count drop by drop the number of drips  
To take something dry and fill it up.  
Fifty million to fill a pond,  
My observations correct to the precise amount.  
But how many drops inside of the ocean?  
Now that's too many drops to count!



The ocean covers over 70% of the Earth's surface... That's a lot of water drops! Can you count the number of water drops in the ocean?

# Strawberry Crabs

An itty bitty strawberry patch  
Spread across the beach.  
But when I bent down to pick,  
The strawberries rolled out of reach!  
So again I tried to pick a berry,  
One from the densest of rows.  
But then suddenly I felt a pinch!  
Then another on my little toes!

Jumping back and looking down,  
I could not believe what I saw.  
That each one of the juicy berries  
Had grown a set of claws!  
*Pinch and pinch and pinch* again!  
My feet were throbbing from the jabs.  
But I suppose that is what I get  
When I confuse a strawberry for a crab.



Strawberry Crab



While sailing around the remote Pacific Islands, we visited an island that is home to many hermit crabs that look like strawberries. Between the strawberry crabs and the coconut crabs, the island sure is paradise for crustaceans!



## Life at Sea

Remote islands in the middle of nowhere.  
Only three feet out of the Pacific they stand.  
A refuge for birds on long-winded journeys.  
An oasis of coral rubble and sand.  
Born out of the lava of volcanoes,  
Ancient eruptions eons ago.  
That on this lava upsprouted life,  
From the shorebirds up top to the corals below.

The clouds here tumble into towers,  
Dense in composure with honey-thick air.  
There's never a dry moment here in this weather,  
Wet everything, from my shoes up to my hair.  
But it's out here on this peculiar journey,  
Out here where the ocean shines blue,  
Out here where the birds race with the dolphins,  
Where I feel happy when my day's doings are through.

Where next on the map do we sail?  
Where next will we set out to explore?  
Well, all I know is I'm up for the journey,  
A life at sea far away from the shore.



*Written on our transit across the South Pacific. We were a pinpoint in a sea of blue with no land in sight for hundreds of miles. It was only us with seabirds alongside.*



## About the Author

My name is Jessica Sandoval, and I am an ROV pilot for E/V Nautilus! While flying the ROVs, we encounter a variety of funky creatures and landscapes that fuel my imagination and inspire my poetry. Every day is certainly a new adventure out at sea!



Off of the ship, I am an engineer and scientist who is pursuing my doctorate degree in materials science and engineering. I research special adaptations of marine creatures and apply their designs to engineering and robotics.

I hope that in reading these poems, they spark your curiosity of the aquatic world and inspire you to explore the ocean with us!



Scan to learn more!

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