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## Scales

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# Scales

Katie G. Handel

Gulp

Flush

With a single movement, a life is gone. Taken by the rolling waters. Flushed with a tinge of regret but gone nonetheless. Only the child cries at the darkness of death. Only the child longs for the life lost. Only the child pines for what had been in relation to a fish. But us, no. Who cares about the life of a fish? Small creatures, shimmering marine bodies only lasting a month or so before tremulously expiring. We are too rational, too knowledgeable to lament the death of a fish, for we know the brevity of their lifespan equals the length of the child mourning into the depths of a porcelain bowl. No, we knew it wouldn't last. Should have happened earlier, the poor thing lived too long. But who are we to judge a lifespan based on labels in a pet shop? We cast our verdicts freely, rapping our gavel, deeming their death warranted. We rate them on their picayune lives, but we, too, are picayune. What grandiloquent judgments of aquatic mortality we cast. By no means! We should care like the child. Sigh like the child.