

**M.J. DONOVAN**

## Remains of the Waves

Foamy lines, frothy border between  
warmth and sea, smooth and textured.  
Undulations of crab bits, seaweed snippets,  
sun-bleached jellyfish,  
marking the reach of tides.

I follow the border,  
the unintentional path,  
an ecology in and of itself.

In wet sand fleas dance.  
On dry beach I step  
on footprints of gulls.

Squatting down to investigate,  
a giant ant with amber wings  
I flip with a stick  
to reveal the  
dragonfly's globe-like  
eyes.

I stay with toes on sand.  
Others, more aquatic, splash in,  
dipping soles, ankles, and knees  
into the silver, roaring sea.

I once tumbled in brine and sand,  
diving under, rumbling in frothy swells,  
gnarled hands of the Pacific  
knitting my ponytail into sea-salt tangle.

A Marin midnight  
of fog-black sky and Mount Tam wind,  
we deserted our beer  
to driftwood and beach fire.  
Giggling, shrieking, singing,  
racing to the sea,  
discarding fleece,  
flannel, and lace  
at the last of the dry sand,  
we bounded into needle-cold surf.

Inky water at our ankles, knees, then waists.  
“Once you get your head wet, you won’t feel the cold!”  
you yelled. We plunged into the  
bellow of the wave.

You never came up.

Only I remain.

**M. J. Donovan** started her writing career coauthoring science textbooks and agricultural publications such as *Co-managing Farm Stewardship with Food Safety GAPs and Conservation Practices: A Grower's and Conservationist's Handbook*. She has since branched out to more creative genres. Her poetry has appeared in the *Porter Gulch Review*. She lives and works in Santa Cruz, California.

**RANDALL EXON**

*Beach House Interior, 2008*  
oil on canvas, 36 x 46 in.



COURTESY THE ARTIST