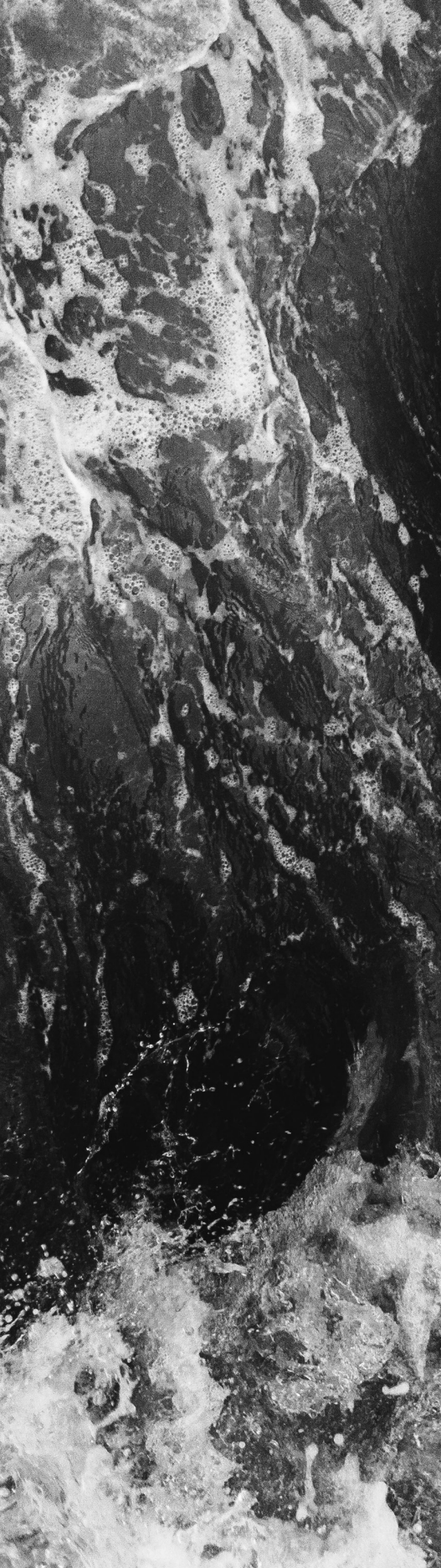




SEA CHURCH

Aimee Nezhukumatathil

Give me a church
made entirely of salt.
Let the walls hiss
and smoke when
I return to shore.

I ask for the grace
of a new freckle
on my cheek, the lift
of blue and my mother's
soapy skin to greet me.

Hide me in a room
with no windows.
Never let me see
the dolphins leaping
into commas

for this water-prayer
rising like a host
of sky lanterns into
the inky evening.
Let them hang

in the sky until
they vanish at the edge
of the constellations—
the heroes and animals
too busy and bright to notice.

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