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## Three Poems by *Barbara Earle*

### Sailing up the Hudson River on a Starry Night

Last night I escaped gravity.  
Weightless and gasping  
I shot into  
space silence.  
Blizzards of stars brushed me  
like snowflakes.  
Comets sped by  
with streaming tails.  
Planets moved in  
unwavering orbits.  
Shooting stars became flung torches  
suddenly snuffed out.

For light years I traveled,  
forgetful of earth  
bewitched by the Milky Way's  
razzle dazzle,  
the moon's cold fire.

On waking I remembered only  
shimmering wonder.

### Writer's Workshop Critique

Like a termite  
I nibble daintily at your poem  
leaving telltale sawdust  
on the floor.  
Delighting at the sound  
of my own voice  
I chew more rapidly inch by inch  
with ravenous good will  
leaving behind  
my spoor of helpful hints.

Have I made lacework of your blueprints,  
bored through structural beams,  
undermined the foundation  
of your fragile word-house?

When you return home  
will you recognize it  
among all the others  
after my ceaseless feeding?

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## The Ocean

From the air  
the sea is a flirt  
flicking her ruffled hem  
at the beach's hot sand  
with cold fingers.

The island  
seems to shudder with pleasure  
through the heat waves.

Don't be fooled.  
She is no coquette  
but a handsome whore  
with a thriving trade  
in wrecks and bodies.  
Out for what she can get,  
she'll steal you blind  
quietly slipping the cash  
from your wallet  
while you sleep.

Don't try to bargain.  
She'll never change her price.  
And watch your back.  
Thrill to her wildness  
if you must.  
But always watch your back.

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**Barbara Earle** began writing poetry at the Thomas School in Rowayton, CT, when she was three. No one ever suggested that she couldn't. Her mother and father wrote much foolish and some serious verse for all family occasions. Her grandmother wrote children's stories. Later she attended Barnard College, Julliard, and the David Mannes School of music in New York City while pursuing a career as a professional harpist. She considers her real career one of being a wife of 56 years, mother of five, grandmother of fourteen and great grandmother of two. At 88 she is still writing in what she considers to be perhaps the most interesting time of her life. She calls poetry "word music" and says it combines two aspects of her life that she treasures, both music and language. Now she has time to indulge these passions to her heart's content.

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