

J. P. WHITE

SEABOOTED

I looked at my father in his last bed and saw him there seabooted in the cockpit, holding in his eyes how a hull slips under a wave without losing its push into weather. He didn't hear my offerings from a book he didn't believe in, so much as the flapping of cloth, the leaning into it, the splash kick of wake boiling off the transom. Like any ocean indifferent to suffering, he contained countless wrecks. On many other nights, I had gone down into his waters to survey the damage, salvage the proof, imagine some blood payment I might add to the patina, but on that night, I put aside my vanishing into the ink of some ancient faded ledger between us and stayed at the low, wet rail and we made the turn through the eye of the wind and together found the morning. One of us heard the ocean over the dune.