

Ode to the Limpet
after Percy Bysshe Shelley

O tiny limpet, you of conical shell,
a frozen firework, a starburst in stone.
O you, variegated sand creature,
cast in carbonate, held fast

until the tide comes in.
When waves again cover
your rocky pool coast, you're
a flurry of motion, scraping,

on the hunt. O you,
of algal carnage, your tongue
a conveyor belt of teeth

stronger than Kevlar^[1]. O you,
“bulldozers of the seashore,”^[2]
leavers of slimy
roadmaps to follow

when the tide ebbs.
Return to your home scar,
the indentation worn into rock
by your travels. O tiny limpet,
hold fast.

^[1] Webb, Jonathan. “Limpet Teeth Set New Strength Record.” *BBC News*, BBC, 18 Feb. 2015, www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-31500883.

^[2] Professor Steven Hawking, 2015

Other sources:

Limpet, The Wildlife Trusts, www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/marine/sea-snails-and-sea-slugs/limpet.

“Limpet.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 Sept. 2020, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limpet.