Dinoflagellates

Whirling whips, these
single-celled drifters
flail their flagella
and spin in the tide.

Since the Triassic,
they've nourished
the world's largest
beings:
calories for the sharks
and whales, oxygen
for the dinosaurs
and the rest of us on
shore.
They can also turn
water red as blood,
poisoning those
who encounter them.

At night, unable
to photosynthesize,
they make their own
light.
The sea fills
with flickering stars;
a miniature cosmos
laps at our feet.

Sneha Madhavan-Reese

Sneha Madhavan-Reese is the author of two poetry collections, *Observing the Moon* and *Elementary Particles*. *Elementary Particles* was a finalist for the Ottawa Book Award and was longlisted for the Raymond Souster Award. Her writing has appeared in publications around the world, including *The Best Canadian Poetry in English 2016*. Born in Detroit, she now lives with her family in Ottawa.
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