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| Following Sea | |
|  | Not that the chrome-blue, white-lipped waves don't overtake, it's that they don't  overwhelm. Hard to believe when you're out there, fighting the tiller, watching  out for the jibe.    *One by one each swell builds behind the straining dinghy and, as if to move on*  *to the larger task, lifts it like a drifting plastic milk jug and passes under,*  *bearing down on our stern now, encouraged by a stiff southwest breeze,*  *overtakes, shoves our little sailboat this way, that way, moves on.*    Because I am afraid, my senses are all I know. Deafening wind in my ears.  Mainsheet chafing palm. Leg muscles tuned to this tango. I see the world as it is,  all at once: storm petrels and shearwaters, pitching horizon, buoys, calligraphies   of clouds, boats passing. And, peripherally... *What did you say? Turn toward me*  *so I can see your voice.* Suddenly, there is the smell of honeysuckle!    *The very repetition of waves reduces fear to acceptance, then monotony. By*  *Portland Head, swell has lost to tide and current, persists as nothing more than*  *a string of watery nudges: the past, the past, the past, taking forever to catch up.*  *And move on.*   What's left behind...whitecaps simmering on the surface.  --Marie Harris |