

**One day, I walked straight into the sea**  
by Macha Lopez

I never regretted it. Even now, hiding in the seabed, memories from the surface taste bitter: scorched earth, plastic dreams turned to smog.

I dare a glance at the shark circling close. Her nares hunt me down; she swims quietly against the tide of my fear. Not long until she finds me. My scales don't blend in.

In a last rush of hubris—legacy from my past life—I dive towards the coral.  
Water shifts behind me.

My fin tears where a leg used to be. Yet I smile, as only stingrays smile.  
Even now, even now, it was all worth it.

Written for the 2024 NYC Midnight *100-word Microfiction Challenge*  
(Round 1)

Genre: Action/Adventure

Word: "plastic"

Action: smiling