



EXCERPTS FROM
MY COMMONPLACE
BOOK(S)

2
APRIL 2026



A COMMONPLACE BOOK IS GENERALLY
CONSIDERED TO BE A 'BOOK INTO
WHICH NOTABLE EXTRACTS FROM
OTHER WORKS ARE COPIED FOR
PERSONAL USE'.

IN MY COMMONPLACE BOOK I LIKE
TO COLLECT BITS OF POETRY,
QUOTES FROM BOOKS AND MOVIES,
INFORMATION ABOUT SHARKS,
LICHEN, MOSS, AND ANYTHING ELSE
I COME ACROSS THAT I FIND
INTERESTING AND WANT TO KEEP TO
REFER BACK TO LATER.

THIS ZINE IS #2 IN A SERIES OF
ZINES I MAKE TO SHOW OTHER
PEOPLE SOME PAGES FROM INSIDE
MY COMMONPLACE BOOK.

IN THIS ONE YOU'LL FIND:
INFORMATION ABOUT THE
REPRODUCTION OF SHARKS AND
ABOUT BIOLUMINESCENT SHARKS, AS
WELL AS THE POEM 'IMMIGRANT
HAIBUN' BY OCEAN VUONG



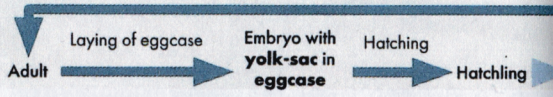
shark reproduction

26/10/2025

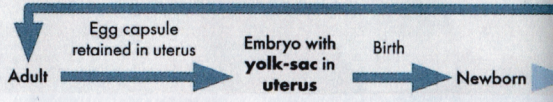
Unlike most bony fishes (which broadcast-spawn huge numbers of tiny eggs, few of which reach adulthood), sharks have internal fertilisation and produce a small number of large young with high survival rates. This reproductive strategy is similar to that of birds and mammals, except that shark pups



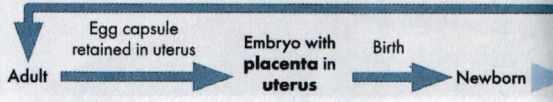
Oviparity



Viviparity with yolk-sac

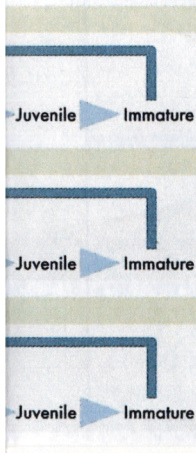


Viviparity without yolk-sac



are born fully-developed and require no further care from their mother. About 40% of sharks are egg-laying (oviparous). Each egg has a large reserve of

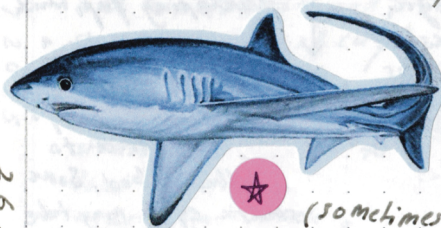
Pelagic Thresher
(*Alopias pelagicus*)



yolk to feed the developing pup, which is protected by a tough capsule and develops anchored to the seabed. Some

shark eggs may take a year or more to hatch, while species that lay their eggs shortly before hatching reduce the risk that they may be eaten by predators. Oviparous sharks include catsharks, zebra sharks, carpet sharks, and epaulette sharks. All other sharks are viviparous: they give birth to live young. In some species, unborn pups are

attached to a yolk-sac, with no direct maternal supply of nutrition (ovoviviparity). Others may have a placental attachment and, like mammals, receive nutrition directly from the mother.



A small percentage of sharks exhibit oophagy

(sometimes spelled otophagy), whereby they feed on infertile eggs produced by their mother; the first pups to develop may even feed on their siblings in the uterus. So much maternal investment means that several species need one or two 'resting' years between litters, to rebuild their energy reserves. Astonishingly, parthenogenesis (asexual reproduction) is known in several species, with female sharks able to produce daughters without a father.

26/10/2025

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05/05/

2025



IMMIGRANT HAIBUN

by Ocean Vuong

"The road which leads me to
you is safe even when it
runs into oceans"

- Edmond Jabès

★

Then, as if breathing, the sea
swelled beneath us. If you must
know anything, know that the
hardest task is to live only
once. That a woman on a sinking
ship becomes a life raft - no
matter how soft her skin. While
I slept, he burned his last
violin to keep my feet warm.
He lay beside me and placed a
word on the nape of my neck,
where it melted into a bead
of whiskey. Gold rust down my
back. We had been sailing for
months. Salt in our sentences.
We had been sailing - but the

edge of the world was nowhere
in sight.



When we left it, the city was still
smoldering. Otherwise it was a
perfect spring morning. White
hyacinths gasped in the embassy
lawn. The sky was September-
blue and the pigeons went on
pecking at bits of bread
scattered from the bombed bakery.
Broken baguettes. Crushed
croissants. Guttled cars. A carousel
spinning its blackened horses.
He said the shadow of missiles
growing larger on the sidewalk
looked like god playing an air
piano above us. He said 'There
is so much I need to tell you.'



stars. Or rather, the drains of
heaven-waiting. Little holes.





05/05/
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99



Immigrant Harbour
by Ocean Vuong

Little centuries opening just long
enough for us to slip through.

A machete on the deck left out
to dry. My back turned to him.
My feet in the eddies. He crouches
beside me, his breath a misplaced
weather. I let him cup a handful
of the sea into my hair and wring
it out. The smallest pearls - and
all for you. I open my eyes. His
face between my hands,

wet as a cut. 'If we
make it to shore',
he says, 'I will name
our son after this
water. I will learn to
love a monster.' He smiles.

A white hyphen where his lips should
be. There are seagulls above us.
There are hands fluttering between
the constellations, trying to hold on.



The fog lifts. And we see it. The
horizon - suddenly gone. An

aqua sheen leading to the hard
drop. Clean and merciful
— just like he wanted.
Just like the fairy tales.
The one where the book
closes and turns to
laughter in our laps.
I pull the mast to full
sail. He throws my name into the
air. I watch the syllables crumble
into pebbles across the deck.



★

Furious roar. The sea splitting
at the bow. He watches it open
like a thief staring into his own
heart: all bones and splintered
wood. Waves rising on both sides.
The ship encased in liquid walls.
'Look!' he says, 'I see it now!'
He's jumping up and down.
He's kissing the back of my wrist
as he clutches the wheel. He
laughs but his eyes betray him.
He laughs despite knowing he





05/05/
2025

99



Immigrant Haibun
by Ocean Vuong

has ruined every beautiful
thing just to prove beauty
cannot change him. And
here's the kicker: there's a
cork where the sunset should
be. It was always there. There's
a ship made from toothpicks
and superglue. There's a ship
in a wine bottle on the mantel
in the middle of a Christmas
party - eggnog spilling from
red Solo cups. But we keep
sailing anyway. We keep standing
at the bow. A wedding - cake
couple encased in
glass. The water
so still now. The
Water like air,
like hours. Everyone's shouting
or singing and he can't tell
whether the song is for him - or
the burning rooms he mistook
for childhood. Everyone's dancing
while a tiny man and woman
are stuck inside a green bottle
thinking someone is waiting at



the end of their lives to say
'Hey! you didn't have to go
this far. Why did you go so far?'
Just as a baseball bat crashes
through the world.

★

If you must know anything, know
that you were born because no
one else was coming. The ship
rocked as you swelled inside
me: love's echo hardening into
a boy. Sometimes I feel like an
amputee. I wake up waiting
for the crush. Maybe the body is
the only question an answer
can't extinguish. How many
kisses have we crushed to our
lips in prayer - only to pick up
the pieces? If you must know,
the best way to understand
a man is with your teeth.
Once, I swallowed the rain
through a whole green thunder-
storm. Hours lying on my back,





05/05/
2025

99

Immigrant Haibun
by Ocean Vuong

my girlhood open. The field
everywhere beneath me. How
sweet. That rain. How some-
thing that lives only to fall
can be nothing but sweet.

Water whittled down to
intention. Intention into
nourishment. Everyone can
forget us - as long as you
remember.



Summer in the mind.
God opens his other eye:
two moons in the lake.



Bioluminescent sharks -
the litefin shark

Litfin sharks (*Dalatis licha*) have been known
about since the 18th century,
but it was only in January
2020 that scientists saw them



11/05/
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The Guardian - Discovered in the
Helen Scubers deep: the sharks that glow in the dark

9 Nov 2022

Helen Scubers



glowing in the dark
for the first time.

They are not the
only bioluminescent
sharks but at up
to 1.8 metres,
kitefins are by
far the biggest
that have been found.



Smaller species of deep-sea sharks
use their lights for survival and
to communicate with one another.
Some have spines on their backs
that are illuminated like light-
sabers, warning intruders to leave
them alone. Some males illuminate
their daspers, a trick that
presumably helps attract mates.
And many of the sharks have
glowing bellies, which help them
hide their silhouettes from pre-
dators lurking beneath them in
the deep, by blending into the
blue light from the surface.

But kitefin sharks are so big



11/05/
2025



they don't need to worry much about hiding from other predators. Malletet (the biologist who found and photographed a glowing kitefin shark) believes their glowing underside may illuminate the seabed to help them hunt, while at the same time letting them sneak up on prey without being seen.

This would also explain how kitefins have been found with much faster-swimming sharks in their stomachs. Kitefins are among the slowest of all sharks; at their normal cruising speed, it would take them more than 10 minutes to amble 100 metres. These big, slow sharks are probably gliding around the twilight zone and launching surprise attacks on prey that rest on the bottom.

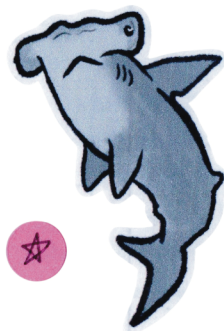


To produce light, sharks have tiny cup-shaped structures, called photophores, dotted across their skin. In the centre of each cup are light-emitting cells, and a lens on top directs the light outwards. Bioluminescence in sharks is controlled by hormones.

"They use two or three hormones, at least, to trigger or slow down the light emission," says Mallett. It is a slow process, and sharks can glow for an hour or two. "Once they light up, they cannot change rapidly," he says.

How exactly bioluminescent sharks produce light is still a mystery and hard to track down.

THIS ZINE CONTAINS MY
COMMONPLACE ENTRIES ABOUT:
SHARK REPRODUCTION,
BIOLUMINESCENCE IN SHARKS, AND
THE POEM 'IMMIGRANT HAIBUN' BY
OCEAN VUONG



ZINE BY JULE SOMMER

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