At a loose end

A thin long line, imagine it,
travelling along the edge of a wave,
turning transparent as the wave breaks.
Then it's carried on the wings of a gull
up, up, up, till it shows itself high,
zigzagging along cliff-top rocks,
fresh and empty as a gull's cry,
and soars to trace the contour of a cloud,
light or dark against deeper sky.

Now it falls straight down in a drop of rain,
leaving itself like a line on the mind,
then flows between finger and thumb, down
the pale page to a full stop.
It waits here, coiled like a long rope
on a scrubbed deck, till maybe someone
grabs the loose end and then, imagine !
pulls it right out to watch it run.

Anne Cluysenaar

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