



Waves (1916)

By Katherine Mansfield

I saw a tiny God
Sitting
Under a bright blue Umbrella
That had white tassels
And forked ribs of gold.
Below him His little world
Lay open to the sun.
The shadow of his Hat
Lay upon a city
When he stretched forth His hand
A lake became a dark tremble.
When he kicked up his foot
It became night in the mountain passes.

But thou art small!
There are gods far greater than thee
They rise and fall
The tumbling gods of the sea.
Can thy Breast heave such sighs
Such hollow savage cries
Such windy breath
Such groaning death
And can thy arm enfold
The old the cold
The changeless dreadful places
Where the herds
Of horned sea-monsters
And the screaming birds
Gather together.
From those silent men
That lie in the pen
Of our pearly prisons –
Canst thou hunt thy prey
Like us canst thou stay
Awaiting thine hour
And then rise like a tower
And crash and shatter?



There are neither trees nor bushes
In my country,
Said the Tiny God.
But there are streams
And waterfalls
And mountain-peaks
Covered with lovely weed
There are little shores and safe harbours,
Caves for cool, and plains for sun and wind.
Lovely is the sound of the rivers
Lovely the flashing brightness
Of the lovely peaks.
I am content.

But thy kingdom is small,
Said the God of the Sea –
Thy kingdom shall fall
I shall not let thee be.
Thou art proud.
With a loud
Pealing of laughter
He rose and covered
The tiny god's land
With the tip of his hand
With the curl of his fingers
And after . . .

The Tiny God
Began to cry –

