

Whisper

I heard Dickinson's soft breathe
so close to my ear
I thought she kissed it.
And everything I knew of her,
poetry and words dissolved.
Just the smell of almonds from
a dry sigh caught in a dusty mouth.

Keelhaul

Press your spine
to my cold keel.
There is something
comforting to your drag.

It would mean pushing
down into the waves,
slipping down the slimy sides
and making it to my tenon.

Nature wants to float us both,

but the weight of ballast stones
sinks our longing, our past
and the storm warned sky.

At the splintering keel
You will never be further
From the nest of the crow,
The yardarms their crosses to bear.

Tar, pitch, and sewn canvas
tight against the wind blown rig,
it is down below where
Mermaids writhe and moan.

If the incessant chill
turned warm, and the crabs
waited to eat your eyes last,
Would you hold me?

Why is it hard to believe
that life as a living tree, wouldn't
desire to die put on craggy

rocks of nurturing land ho!

You are my longest,
most dedicated disciple,
a killer, sailor, tinker, and son,
you are my most precious flotsam.

You will be long gone
when the dying tide casts
my splintered, wrecked bones
ashore to tell stories of drifting wood.

Dreams of Icarus

I told you
the sun was absent
in the sky of my dreams.

Without opening your eyes,
you said, "That's okay,
you're just different."

I've dreamt of whales

breaching upon rocks,
dying in low moans,

Of apocalyptic skies
refined in pixelating hell fire.
We all choked in the plume.

In scenes without the sun
everyone knows what happened
in dreams they weren't in.

If I can stay,
tease out why
I dream dim dreams,

I can might attempt
something beautiful,
something conspired,

And act on a deceit
that will finally
crack the ceiling.

Rising up in the murk, I razor cut
a hole in my subconscious
to give those sad fantasists illumination.

I won't survive, slashing and stabbing,
recoiling back and landing sullied and broken,
in a ray of sunlight, so long denied.

I will look up, as the crowd gathers to hear
my last words, "That's the sun."
They will look sad and say, "We know."

Clem Cobb

Last time I saw Cobb
He was on the steamship Larchmont,
Shoveling coal, just beneath
The heaving waterline, steaming
Along the winter coast.
He was hard off a mighty drink,
Cast by a woman with no voice, and
A coming storm. They say,

He woke from his bilge bottom bunk,

And stumbled to the steam chamber

To shovel his woes in coal all the way

To the East River.

Three miles south of Watch Hill

When the schooner and the steamer collided,

They say Clem Cobb ate pieces of the boiler,

When the explosion ripped open the ship.