

“Further out”

Moonshine wears heavy on this swaying dock  
at night time – the rusted chain connected to land  
dirties and dwindles, O! we can see it going.

This is the work at hand: out with the old,  
in with the *less-old*. Seaweed clambers through  
the moistcracked lumber like liver spot hairs.

Martha once picked her needle out of the wrinkled  
pine knots and just went on knitting, like she’d never  
dropped it. It used to be so easy. Those definitive lines,  
the cracks and worldly intricacies – they’re all gone,  
lost to the blur; these calloused fingers barely detect  
texture anymore, even though the wrinkles have grown.

Moonshine and time beat this swaying dock  
into submission – the lakebrain rocks our limbs,  
the sifted chain rusts and decays, Martha and I  
slip further and further out

“The old man on the bridge”

The old man stumbled into the plaza  
drunk as a fish  
and leaned alongside me, on the rail  
over-looking The East River.

“This sun at high noon,” he mumbled,  
“those two young lovers in bountiful caress,  
these Brooklyn Cedars in the eve of Spring’s bloom,  
egad! Get it over with, already -

bring on the night;  
bring on the heartbreak;  
bring on the firewood;  
for Christ’s sakes, bring on death, already!” he  
    hollered,  
calling out for lunch  
with breakfast in his mouth.

I sighed, listening to the waves  
lapping against the Brooklyn Bridge  
slowly, slowly,  
one at a time.

“Marty’s dream”

“I used to have *boxes* full of old photos.” He said.  
“My closet was crammed *full* of junk.  
Mementos from past lives, past titles...  
I kept all my daughter’s used school-projects on the  
mantle in my bedroom  
with all her brother’s baseball trophies.  
I kept every trophy, every goddamned prize...”  
He stared into his tattered boots, scraping the mud off  
the sides of the one with the other.

“I remember thinking one night  
of how long it took me to collect all those things,  
how solid it all seemed -  
I loved having a spot to relax, a wall to put up pictures  
of my family,  
a place to prop up my mind  
so that I could look at it, and know that it was there,  
and that *I was here* somewhere, staring back at it...”

The homeless man  
took a long drag on his cigarette  
and leaned consolingly against the hard concrete.  
“It was the most lucid dream I’ve ever had.”

“Painting for Gracie”

The fresh smell of latex hummed from the paint tray.

“It’s amazing,” Gracie remarked,

“seeing just how far this house has come.”

Old photos of the house were spread out on the  
counter,

and as I took to flipping through them, Gracie sifted

through her various antique nostalgias -

lives and husbands passed over like cobblestones,

friends and events coursed through like so many layers

of varnish.

“Strange, how retro these pictures look... It all seemed  
so modern at the time.”

As I rolled the paint on the wall, I began to see through  
the dream, into the future:

I saw Gracie, dead in the cold dirt, and everything

around me became meaningless-

the room, the paint, the antique mementos,

indeed, the old woman and her many lives – rendered

completely obsolete, completely transient.

I thought, ‘what is the point of all this?’

“This house may go through many layers of paint,”

Gracie said,

“but underneath it all, it’s still the same old house.”

“Lifewaves”

The ocean makes no effort in  
rolling,  
the tide  
just keeps coming in waves  
as though from some far-off source  
whence the shore’s pulse returns  
again and again -  
we hear  
the radio  
sweep in from a distance,  
the spirit of the wind caught  
in a thrust of sound, the harmony  
of instruments, some musical group’s  
transmutation of the ocean’s  
ebb and flow.  
Visions  
come to us  
like the peaks of pillars,  
untraceable until the crest has passed  
over our heads, and we reach the other side -  
I had no idea I was riding a wave  
until I became old, watching  
my fleeting peak disappear  
like an echo into  
the swelling  
distance