

the blackest imaginable white

there is no horizon.

nothing is crisp, everything the same shade of white.

you assume gravity is in check, that you're standing upright.

from your mind's eye, you conjure up turns you normally base
on split second analyses of angles and shapes.

a distant version of yourself, you feel you've been here before,
but all you truly know is where earth pushes up more.

in vain, questions eddy in this whitewash guise;
you might as well ski with eyes closed, you realize.

if not for the lone tree, a child's scribble on the page,
speed and direction would be impossible to gauge.

but when a turn takes your gaze away from this pine,
and before you've found a new guiding sign,

your stomach falls into your throat; you turn upside down,
tumbling in an inner ear tempest, empty of sound.

and for a brief moment, the blackest imaginable white
beckons you to the edge of the world, in blinding light.

Harbor Mnemosyne

Dare I moor to ships untangling from sea,
to bleary avatars who manifest
as my father and Odysseus cease to be?

I festoon stories with remnants of me,
and garland clouds with memories abreast,
but dare I moor to ships untangling from sea?

His ship emerges like Aphrodite;
her breath eddies then settles on my chest.
As my father and Odysseus cease to be,

waves whisper of his days in the Navy.
I puppet him through his harbor of rest.
Dare I moor to ships untangling from sea,

cast him an anchor from my balcony?
Gulls ferry his ship to pinkening West,
as my father and Odysseus cease to be.

And will the waves lap, so that even he
fades to a Golden Book I once loved best?
Dare I moor to ships untangling from sea
as my father with Odysseus ceases to be?

my father's fading

tinker, tinker

tin, tin, tin

the light of his own time

blown from human circumstance

like electricity that began at a bell

now the rest of some obscure color

tintinnabulation

the smoky arrangement of this word

from ripples of my father's fading

a bell ringing throughout my toes

tin, tin, tin

tintinnabulation

his hands, teeth, guts, thoughts even

might be stars or railroad spikes

he has to be stars

tinker, tinker

tin, tin, tin

Source:

Harding, Paul. *Tinkers*. New York: Bellevue Literary Press, 2010. Print.

Glass Stain

God's rays, through windows, in colored shadows stain
her skin, prism of paint descends on dismal sky,
red hair, pale light cascading around her pain.

Under church canopy, sheltered from the rain,
verdant vines enlace her arms, birds fly in bluest dye,
God's rays, through windows, in colored shadows stain.

Across her skin, mermaids smile, flowers bloom in vain,
and beneath the canvas, a faintly heard cry,
red hair, pale light cascading around her pain.

The color of His stain, a kaleidoscope to her vein,
surfaces to beguile butterflies perched nigh,
God's rays, through windows, in colored shadows stain.

As a curtain of light or the scent of amber He reigns,
lulls her with rainbows from panes of glass up high,
red hair, pale light cascading around her pain.

Here the light is wan, but here she can remain
captured in dance of brilliant light and dye,
God's rays, through windows, in colored shadows stain,
red hair, pale light cascading around her pain.

Graveyard of Anchors

In shoal delta waters, fishing to quell
the drift, I heave my hook into its grave.
Sea grass sway below, ghosts stirred by each wave.
My anchor plummets down, hums like a knell.
As Hades' viper pulls beauty to Hell,
forsaken anchors green tendrils enslave,
and barnacles grip the tombstones to stave
off the plunge, laid to rest under worn shell.
To retire here, sweet rocking side-to-side
with driftless wood and sunken glass I'd be
interred with debris, gypsies cast aside.
Divorced anchor tethers never bob for a quay;
for open waters and what may betide,
these algae-covered ropes point out to sea.