

LAKEHURST

For most of us, buoyed up by dreams
like a million cubic feet of hydrogen,
it is May 6th, 1937.

When I say *Lakehurst* you
should recall the weightless silver
bulk of the Von Hindenburg just as it
flares and the skeletal girders cage
fire an instant before they warp
like the commentator's voice straining
against panic and disbelief.

But not yet. Not yet.

Drizzle
frays the overcast and we float
above the parquet of New Jersey, placid
as a waltz from the aluminum piano, while
the irony this poem depends on gathers
like static in the folds of the cashmere
scarf draped around your neck, my neck,
perfecting a spark.

Standing here
at the broad lounge window, watching
the drenched ground crew below jiggle
like puppets at the ends of the anchor lines,
we dismiss the tickle of electricity
that lifts our hair.

Glasses we raised
to the statue at the harbor mouth lifting
her torch are still in our hands as the
pylon eases for the nose and one of us asks:

What was the name of this place?

Lakehurst.

WARRIOR

Last night in a Gallup bar he climbed down
into the earth-cool dark. Tribes

of names that danced in his head
rode away south, their black robes flapping.

His own staggered off past a cottonwood
and dried up. Weeds caught him.

The wind snuffs around this morning
but nothing disturbs his ceremonial quiet.

At the top of the ladder the sky waits
like the turquoise eye of the Anglo barmaid.

Young as she was and

small, that exile rankled. She fixed her mind on going back. While others went their ways, She would return, find the beginning, buck the flow, dive deep into that cornucopia from which the richest world around her tumbled interminably, from which she'd sprung so recently, could feel receding steadily.

She chose for passage an abandoned whelk— dusted with salt, bone white and sound—not the best for water, perfect for sailing time. Set out on that sea, she bobbed and rocked, and as she rocked, she dreamt she grew and grayed. Faces came and went, spoke and were silent. And she forgot them all when the shell's keel dragged in shallows and tipped her on the beach above the wavelets ticking up the sand like clocks almost run down.

Pleased to have arrived and yet a little cross not to have been met until along the shore came *Nothing* she's imagined. *Nothing* to be afraid of in a gown that whispered as it shimmered and and kept on as *Nothing* bent to lift her like a foundling from a doorstep basket and she felt herself dissolving like a lump of sugar in a cup of tea. And the notes of the soft, insistent lullaby that *Nothing* sang were like the clever, busy fingers of Penelope at midnight untangling at the loom. And she was that tapestry. And in a moment more there was no face, no fingers, no song.

AT MOOT POINT

Pamlico River, Washington, N.C.

At dawn, mullet slap
the river. Here. There.
Hardly enough breeze
to wrinkle it awake.

Trees on the far shore—
the ragged hem of sky
up before me and walking
away into forgetful blue.

Late last night at
the end of the dock water
wide enough gentle
enough to rock each star.

Now it offers up cloud.

A gull. A dog. A light
plane nattering the air-
port. A single halyard
strumming a mast.

I don't see anyone. Sun
starting to warm my back
like a father's hand.

The mountains are a good way
that way. The sea, this way.
Here, the river is wide
and slow and calm.

SUNFLOWERS

They won't look the sun they yearn for in the eye
but they feel his gaze.

At the edge of the garden swelling for him
their huge heads hang, ashamed of their lank stalks.

Each day he passes them over.
They stare at the dirt and weep bees.