

stanza break

Day 8-- changed course 3 degrees north--
making 16 knots-- calm--
Morning dolphins trail diamond confetti, four
of them parenthesizing Brine Bitch's bow wave.
At noon we cross their borders, three wetbacks
with rigged passports and alien marques.
Our undulating escorts push Pagliacci grins
nearer. Whistling nattering clicking,
they power off to play with their peers.

We pass beyond sun's jurisdiction, specimen bags
and bottles like talismans on our belts.
Man-shadows thrust lights into bluer cold
for my camera to follow. Most of the bounty eludes
my colleagues' grasp like eels. Always missing
the depth rapture, the kind that lingers for days,
they get bends outside their scholars' shells.

But their devotion is pure. Emerging
from calcified layers of academic reefs, they dream
of rescued worlds. Probing la mer with bare hopes
and hands, they pour zeal in the dream like dye.

Breathing is an opus. Blistered silver whole notes
define our progress. We record the timpani of now,
noise envelops us, echoes in empty conchs,
flicked by flippers, bounced off mammals.
Sound began here, anciently shaped for other ears
yet willing to coil in mine.

Day 11-- ghostwatch again-- huge lone humpback
blows 15 feet, fan-shaped spout-- call him Ishmael--
I want you here next time. Here where truth is oldest.
The wake of my dreams phosphoresces in your hair.
I'll bring you pulsing domes of half-moonlight
trailing ribbons. And sequined amulets,
wisps of orange and purple ruffles for your wrist.
Born of poets, how can you resist my offerings?

Day 13-- the horizon is a con artist as Brine Bitch
aims home with whalesongs to play you, samples
of sea-broken sun, the taste of 10 degrees of green.
The flying fish of my thoughts silver the surface.

Day 14-- one hour from port-- overcast-- ahead
of a squall east-- My dreams curl around you
like spindrift. I am just-loaded high-speed film,
each frame waiting to feel the press of light.