

We dive with morning. Slowly we go down
 Through gilded glare, a curtain-rise of krill.
 Festoons of light define us yellow-brown.
 La Mer, the mother of our lot, life's mill--
 We come back to our need for fin and gill.
 A glimpse of flipper-white in this deep allness--
 Oh, Quasimodo-- please forgive our smallness!

If elephants are roots of heaven, whales
 Are roots of earth, embodied in eons
 Of wrinkled metamorphic rock that sails
 Like airborne silk the inner echelons
 Of poles, their tails heraldic colophons.
 Fear has its moment. Even here we yaw
 In their dynamics, helpless bobbing straw.

Somehow their sound should be a great deep gonging,
 Vibrating thunder through sarcophagus dark.
 Or even low-note blues of bass sax longing
 With timbal beats to match the regal arc
 Of vertabrae between each piston spark.
 Four-octave ranges, shrill with reedy flaws,
 Compel us to pursue effect and cause.

They may sing higher, far above our ear--
 Sometimes they're racers' engines on a speedway.
 But now there's more than sound transmitted here--
 The water's charged with living interplay,
 Chain energy aplenty to relay
 A simple message, one we both receive:
Yes, you're accepted. No one has to leave.

I'm drowning in superlatives and verbs,
 My camera weighted down with disbelief.
 The nearest humpback glides toward me, but curbs
 Its thrust. Its hide hosts life in bas-relief--
 Such texture, form-- a frayed sargasso sheaf
 Trails down between us, stirs reality.
 My film must prove such animals can be.

(cont.)