

HEMBY AND THE HUMPBACK WHALES
(Megaptera novaeangliae)

GODD
FIRST PG
26 you keep this till
12/95

The salty core of this Aquarian's dream:
To slither like a seal through parting swarms
Of small day-feeding fishes; their bright stream
Defines our path until they plunge like storms
Of flying arrows, cross the scooping forms
Of undulating outriders-- our pair--
Pagliacci faces grinning us a dare.

And now the dream is real as we pause here:
Increasing time each day the sea is home.
The flanking porpoise escort pushes near,
Suspecting us for wetbacks, monochrome
Against a beige and turquoise catacomb,
Who crossed their borders holding rigged passports
And alien marques to dabble in their sports.

Our bubble wake is coded melody;
Each globule rises to a treble staff
Of living elkhorn branching like a tree.
Loose blue conveys whole notes, a sonic graph;
Our ears are tuned to each breath's epitaph.
High coral altars bless the tithes of sun
Along the reeftop posed as Helicon.

Ahead, my partner's outline forms the start
Of new collages, sudden sequin-flashed
With black-masked angels practicing their dart
And pivot, ballet-drilled, pink silver-slashed.
Poor Hemby can't perceive the treasures cached
Around us in the gently rising swells.
He suffers bends outside his scholar's cells.

He has no feel for magic strewn between
Prolonged depth rapture (my kind always lingers
On for days) and staid degrees in marine
Biology. The beauty slips his fingers
Like eels eluding grasp. His spinal tinglers
Misfire; articulation never fails
His wealth of facts. Yet he, too, dreams. Of whales.