

despoina

they said you were lost at sea. my own father  
rippled dark with conviction that god kept His right hand to clear your way,  
His left at your back to ward off mean winds or bad luck or retreat. lost  
in a boat no bigger than my own tomcat faith which visits only when  
winter snows make good hunting go bad. the sea had wrangled herself into knots  
frozen like my bedsheets unmade from second grade til first late blooming love  
and stiff with polluted neglect  
moving not in waves but bulldozing your small craft  
with her asphalt ice. they said  
you were lost, and i

walked invisible through the rooms of your house, dragging small hands over  
every rough patch of  
unfinished business --

spackle hardened unsanded over broken holes / tiles turned loose on the  
floor boards / the window that yielded its glass under constant assault of  
your son who threw stones like some blow bubbles / and the dog who  
would not be housed.

from within that cobwebbed aquarium, i inhaled the webs of inflicted innocence,  
tasted the making of my own history at the back of my throat, and  
exhaled to dust that embracing enclosing architecture

i heard the school teachers whisper their malignant pity, taking my calm for  
ignorance: i didn't know, did i not know i had lost my only father to the sea in her  
contract with indifferent winter?

it was never god's left hand or right that brought you

praying your way across thin patches of ice, over the spectre of a man who  
surrendered his legs to the brain spell of impossibility, to find your way from the  
frozen shores through the sewage of industry and cold mud of moral confusion  
back. back. back to your oversized well heated bed, your dog,  
your own golden wife. it was me

who refused to allow a typical season to keep the original culprit from fixing  
my brother's glass fractures. i drew no rooms in my rendering  
for a pale grieving mother, or public pity, fouler than fever-soured milk  
vomited from a colicky baby.

it was me who refused the bitch sea her appetite for conquering.

not saved you, but us all from some stupid tragic heroic exit. you  
had to come home to fix or break the rest of that thick dreamt thin built house,  
wrestle the half wild warrior dog, and face in the spring  
the glistening impermanence of even your pact  
with a two-handed god.