

North Shore**1**

Storm-black
shark-ripped
useless wrack-
lonely sea!

Rose and silver
pearling stillness
for shy, careful
seahorses home.

2

Sheeted and curled with silver-pearl of summer,
sea all shimmer and easy lapping,
bringing us basking days
and the shiver of sharing
with narwhals and the Oceanides
in water knowing Atlantis . . .

Bringing sea, never
the land's just being there,
but bringing, coming
in to us, bringing what being?

Presence demanding presence,
insisting, bringing
the flood of being and its cry —

In the heart and down the rock
to the flood coming in
blue-green blue-black
opal and white thunder,
the cry we were made for.

3

This rock and cold at the sea, this nothing
to tourists and Thanksgivings,
this rock and cold at the sea
will be the lonely thing with God it was:

the sad suns and the ice are on their way
again. Come, nothing, where the soul can build
the quiet things that build the soul and leave
the cold rock and the cold sea all their strength.

4

November pouring
grey stinging
lord of the air
and broken shore,

blue-black thunder
bringing November
nothing, November
hulking grey,

mock us—gloom,
flood, forbid:
we stay, you show us
we last, we live.

5

Tides of discovery
ebb: the call
innocence hears
could not have lasted:

Bless the need
that saves the dream,
bless the chill
and bless the logs—

In a minute's rest,
in a glance aside
from fire's demand,
innocence pours!

6

The logs are nothing:
nothing but Canada
woods in the blood,
the sea in a room,
the sea retold,

Nothing but hunting
in the blue-green ice
with herons and seals,
picking a way
over Mars on earth,

Nothing but sliding
wrack down the ice
and sliding after it
head-first, butt-first
over the silver,

Nothing but salt
smoke in the house,
dolphins in the air
and frigates plunging
to sunrise and bounty . . .

Consummation! fire
melting the chill
and memories out of us,
leaving us pleased
even with ashes.

7

These walks are nothing. Two that find
the sea along a blown down shore
are nothing—how can we take pride
in finding that the soul is born
of nothing, when the sea itself
and the bare dunes are so much more? . . .
where nothing is, all may be well.

Once, it was right that seas should seem
ways to the world, paths of the will
to clothe a naked world. But we
stand on a different shore: we think
of all that world behind us. When
the world is built, the soul must build
where nothing is, and only there.

Robert Beum