PEARL

For in my nature I quested for beauty, but God, God hath sent me to sea for pearls. —Christopher Smart

The hiss of *kiss* and *celebrate* is the most lonely and desolate thing in the world Ten years from now questions will be asked and discarded unanswered As if worries had tied themselves in knots As if sorrow cut your bowels to pieces

Once I thought I could never fall in love That the decision was somehow beyond me Once I thought light was kind because it engraved an image of you on my eye The dizzying spotlight we shine on the unconscious reveals much that is foul minimal forged in desire

The problem is decoration is expression The problem is not obvious This world is so much ocean Even the Gods of English formed a language so fluid it has washed back for centuries over their words and faces Blurring images shifting rhyme and sound like sand This is my lament Pick a new obsession Yes I love you So what? What prevents me from weeping? I feel my face adopt and discard expressions as if they were tissues or over-ripe plums Unkempt Disheveled Slovenly Not remote Not dainty

Happiness enrages me and you are wrong to require it of me Things worn next to skin like perfume lingerie the body of a lover cannot clothe the heart in anything that will protect it but resignation can

A spasm of dread so intense The remainders of you have been discarded Disposed Dispossessed When this life is consolidated into a graceful intensity I will sit quietly in distress Scared and wistful

Some brave people wise enough to distrust water still trust the boats they set upon it The Sea of Crises and The Sea of Cold cannot be drowned in I despise water O sweetheart O my dream Though I remain your admirer in eternity It's not as if you were my precious pearl

Some groans are ripped from a place you didn't know existed Twice I passed beyond despair into desolation and once I left desolation for that place beyond groans I worry that the souls inhabiting us are brittle spectres afraid to desert the protection offered by a body Sometimes I hear the loose nervous rattling of my soul inside its shell Fellow Traveler How shall I salute you A handshake a spasm a nod