

Division of Labor

I'm wondering if I would have tied obligation
to the wooden post of the dock if others hadn't already.
Mine goes certain and uncertain on little swells
the current makes dough of itself by kneading
with the heels of uninformed hands
lily pads with upturned edges ready to collect
themselves incrementally. I send a part
of myself from the boat to the village I read somewhere
can swallow an I not into a crowd but into buildings,
the *was constructed* of them, their *was here* and *loved*,
pleats into which an I can slip and fade
like water fades its temperateness to boiling. Which makes
my body whistle, the I in me whistles, not absent luck
or looseness, but through a fissure in the body
that's always there between reaching and touching,
the kind of fissure that makes the wall of me more apparent
and the whistle sting more. Through the wall
I watch my thought of looking up at the sail the wind
fell out of and decide to send another part
after the first, which, like the tail of a lizard, had grown back
to bend and in bending had proven able,
declared itself an ear to receive a call. Into village
it responded by moving into admitting into
its fragment the squares of on-the-surface I thought
beautiful from the boat, beyond the surface
were below-the-surface things like warble and treble

and a bar with wingback chairs
where the part I sent first was ordering a Manhattan,
not astonishing its piece into abeyance
but into ice cubes projecting memory it collected
like a bowerbird, something distant
that had happened on its way from the boat,
which was now one of many boats attributing to dock
what they had learned from the ocean, that anything bobbing
bobs because of anything else. Although the boats were empty,
they had drifted together and were now each tapping
the dock on its shoulder, without question
a scene so solemn and tranquil I regretted sending it
with the third part of someone I no longer resembled,
which, I guess, was the point of the first part of me returning
the smell of bourbon in a felted wooden box
where its I had rested in the shape of itself
taking shape through the spiral of a French horn. I gestured
this part under the vinculum
where an empty boat was
waiting to be divided where the decimal sat
along the center thwart my first part mirrored to
without my face ever moving and before I intended
to untie the boat, it was and I had
left my second and third parts in the village
not knowing if it was light out or dark.