

CLIMBING MT. BALDY AT THE DUNES

There's always a boom in sand—a business
you might have to enter some day
if the river dries up, unless, by the way,
you already own a toll booth or a business
selling portraits done in clay.

And that's how we came to be on the dune.
It shone like ore, a hill of gold
pristine before plains flowers and old
Indian trails. It was more than just dune.
It was how things come to be untold.

Our feet felt the value of time slipping:
As we went up, what we were going up on
was coming down. "Icon," it said, "eon."
"Hourglass," we answered, gripping
our way up. "Broken," it said, and, "C'mon."

PORTRAIT

1

Without the lightness of the sponge,
without the armor of the clam,
without a look about a ship
at rest on the bottom,
without so much in the sight of eternity,
of which these pictures are but samples.

2

With bare knuckles,
with many trees felled,
with many times in the bottom of the rowboat
pressing my hands equally
toward port and starboard
as the great cruisers swamped us.

3

With the flickering of stars,
with melodies improvised
on a framework of space,
with intervals, with distances to run,
with a God who is the breeze
around my fire.

4

And a bruise in the water,
and swift current,
and half a loaf,
and the zero of the sun,
and a skewed body
and an iron kiss.

5

Among shards of gourds.
In the roar of the pine sap.
With the carcass of a sparrow
and the banner of the dew.
In a smear of history.
In the thrill of a green flash.