

On the Circumstances Regarding Our Business

58

Prayer, I said a little one,
Deferential, I was,
among the huge red casks of olive oil
and the skidloads of salt and dried basil.
Expensive our shipment
and late for my brother's barge,
I had a stopper for the cask
and a little brown rosary—
bread, I had a slice,
I'd have liked it with a dish of oil.
Oil with a dish of salt.
On the nicks and shambled body
of my thumbworn Christ
I said a little prayer:
"Oil, be slow. Be oil,
and do not sink—
wealthy make us soon."
With fury, my brother pressed,
and the casks were heavy to move.