

Peter Munro

from HARD WEATHER PRAYERS

NAVIGATION

I navigate this shoreline
by an instrument tuned to breath,
tuned to rain and the rain-burnished
cries cast by gulls across Middle Channel.
Kayak Island and Near Island ghost in from the obscured
horizon, silky as trollers gliding home.
Their bluff shoulders, clutched by sea star and dog
whelk, break waves as they bear their wakes
down on me, white as prayer,
vague within their veil of rain.

I love this rain. I always have. I loved this rain
even when it sucked so much warmth from the core of me
that I could no longer pincer index finger to thumb
and I stared at my rain slick hand
as if it were a sea creature I had never seen before
so that out of numb wonder came a wonder
at this hand's otherworldly beauty.

I drove the skiff against winter,
my wet suit soaked and hardening
my thighs. I love the rain
blown to snow against my cheeks.
My bag of abalones stiffened in the skiff-
belly beside my snorkle. And my hand,
clawing itself to the tiller, found my way home
for me through the snow-heavy sky
slung low to muffle the sea.

WEATHER AS A MODE OF SPEECH

Christ, walk to me across this water.

The wanter I get,
the colder you fall.

What fails, what alters rain
and the slate of the sea, salts
your grace where the wind sliced.

Across this water I want my way.

Christ wail to me along the drawn wind.

When I hurl my sound out to meet the gust of you

I cast the shell of my ear against the horizon.

I lift the world in my eye
to the cross-

hairs that a sextant navigates to what fails. Christ savor
the silt filtered up through my skin from the sheltered deep,
enter my weather rained to death and the sea shifts its altar.

Altered by rain, the surface of sleep, stippled
by the spare drizzle, dimples
quietly over eelgrass blades,
green chapels unfurled for the sea-hare.