

WAVEY

As always, now this need to reach the outer
brow of land, no matter how far off the seas
across a human habitation clouding
like a rash sweet rills and leas.
Why creep through incrustation
blasting like a dread disease
the face of comely planet? What salvation
waits a half a continent away, until
I dwell in swelling sense of celebration,
standing still at tidal sill
adorned with blue scarf curled and
island centered on it fill
the eye? To end as I began, where world is
small and tide is high, might bless with rising life
the brooding headlands. Ever eastward hurled with
weather, pilgrim wander, wife
to Avalon, to North, by
compass driven where time's knife
of ice has riven oldest hills on earth. My
merry, wrinkled hills go swimming where I fix
my foot and face the sea. They tumble forth like
babes or wedding guests, round hicks
in pink and blue and mauve. Land
torn from another world, old mixed
in young, new continent with old close-woven,
parent in the child enfolded, who can say
where one begins and other ends? Hills dove and
islands surfaced in the bay.
Now who can say what love has
joined them at the valley, way
of water? How their borders move above as
rise or fall of sea require? What seiche foretells
where soul and body differ? When the cove was
empty as a corpse, caged bell's
enduring knell sang loudly,
"Alleluia, tide still wells,
Creator and Redeemer." Voyage out, we
sought to shape the city to our praise and craved
control of nature, whether world without we
mastered, world within we braved.
The voyage back, a random
beauty gives life meaning, saved
from talus on the floor our arts abandon,

read in talus on the shore. Did glacier run
for this, to catch our composition's ransom,
pour it from the mountain, ton
on ton to pave the verge and
decorate the meadow? One
may feel for painted evergreens and birch in
pallid ledges leaning, longing felt when young
for absent lover's face at soft hot surging
core from where all forms are wrung.
Consume and keep, we said who
hope to be consumed by tongue
of holy fires and rocked in stony bed to
music of the spheres as part of all we thought,
believed in, knew and were. Before I wed new
forms, for now paths I have sought,
halls, currents blaze in mind the
trails I tread, dear custom-taught,
along the landscape of my soul, that binds a
world to its reflection, saves in little all
it pictures. Now we cling to life in tidal
lands beyond the terminal
moraines, within the shadow
of the raptor. If it fall
upon me and I know it, sinking at slow
passes, bitter-tasting death washes back
black and brackish in the mouth. But sad though
mortal state may be, some crack
in armor of the plane or
passenger, so long as lack
of knowledge of our coming end may deign, our
life flows forth untouched by death, however sure,
however lying soon or late in wait for
us. If vigor, bloom endure,
in what sense are we dying?
For the time allowed, the lure
of place is immortality. In thriving
age, the best places never are much changed.
A hundred years, and all the dear surviving
will be gone, but seas so strange
if not forever, longer
linger. River runs its range
and streams into the sea as if to longed-for
assination, flings embrace of silver veins
out over heaving darkness. Is it stronger
like Aurelius the Sane
to leave one's mark and die, or

to surrender on the wane
and gain the general flood? Whatever prior
thought is gone, nothing goes to nothing. Can
the soul by losing self in formless mire
put on power of the land
or quicken with the water?
Trust this spill from awkward hand
of littoral meanings, an unbeliever's psalter:
blood and sweat and tears will always be of salt.