

THE JOURNEY OF FIVE THOUSAND MILES

"The sea reflects all."

Verses from Crossing the North Pacific

Guam to the American West Coast, May - September 2003

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Expedition Leader

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First edition.

A NOTE ON THESE POEMS

These poems were not written as poems. They surfaced inside the working ship's log of the RV *Heraclitus*, an eighty-five-foot, three-masted junk in ferrocement — launched from Oakland, California, in 1975 by volunteers of the Institute of Ecotechnics, working eighteen-hour days for eight months to get her into the water. Over the following decades she sailed more than 270,000 nautical miles across every ocean but the Arctic, worked two years up the Amazon, carried researchers into the Antarctic, and, through the coral she collected along the Yucatan coast, helped seed the reef eventually built inside Biosphere 2, the sealed ecological experiment many of her own builders went on to create.

By 2003, several years on from the coral reef mapping voyages of the earlier years, the *Heraclitus* had turned toward open water — a four-month North Pacific crossing from Guam to the American West Coast, much of it far from any land at all. It was in the middle of navigation notes and weather observations that the prose would occasionally give way, mid-entry, to something else — lines that broke differently, that reached for rhythm instead of record.

This crossing produced far more verse than the earlier, reef-lined voyages that came before it — perhaps because there was so much less to report and so much more time in which to think. This is a collection of those moments: sixty-two poems, gathered from four legs of the crossing, presented here largely as they were first set down. They were not composed for a reader. They are offered now for the same reason the journal itself was: because the record, once made, seemed worth keeping.

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THE JOURNEY OF FIVE THOUSAND MILES

Crossing the North Pacific

May 4 - June 9, 2003

Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

*Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz,
The sound resonates,
We are already programmed,
A fish is on the line.
The line runs fast,
Sailfish.*

*The game starts,
Pulling, letting go, pulling,
Sensitivity in reeling the fish in,
Eibes and Stinj on the gaffs,*

*As the fish is pulled close to the stern.
Six hands are pulling the fish in,
All together,*

Ensemble,

*Forty pounds of fish,
And enough adrenaline to wake everybody up.*

*Camera, trophy, pride, excitement,
Sea people in action.*

*I speak to the fish,
Looking in his eye,
While I stick the knife in his head,*

*Telling him my respect,
You will be eaten with delight.*

He hardly struggled.

We released two baby sucker fish clinging to his side.

*The ocean is welcoming us,
As we are welcoming the ocean into our souls.*

Kronos and Vulcan made an alliance, geological

*Kronos and Vulcan made an alliance, geological
tempo,
Read on the cliffs of Pagan,
Layers of rock, lava flow, and ashes,
A blanket of pine forest,
A one-way hourglass falling into the sea.
The energy of wind and rain,
Reminding the land that everything flows,
Like castles of sand falling into the ocean.
The ocean takes it all back.
Beauty shines,
Destruction and rebirth,
Tongues of destructive lava took over all life,
Now life creates,
Once again.
A seed finds a crack,
Growing into a tree,
Hosting birds,
Safe by the lava fortress from wild pigs and
cattle.
The plains show scars,
A field hit by a shower of meteorite,
Man-made meteorite from the Second World
War.
The plains look like a gruyère cheese,
Coated in a mantle of green mold.
Man left.
A tribe of sea people came,
Anchoring at the edge of a black sand beach.
I realize we are a different, self-made species of
man.*

*We strive to recover our heritage,
Hunter-gatherer,
Not for immediate survival,
But to regain a wealth lost along the way,
Without guns,
Playing with evolutionary scenes,
Reactivating our essences.
Dolphins visit,
Flying fish take off,
Dream light of blues, galactic dives.
Huge spiderwebs across an overgrown path,
Shifting the eyes' focus.
Pagan is teaching us to see,
Pagan is teaching us to hear, smell, and taste,
Our hands touching, caressing,
Biospheric understanding,
Moving from one ecozone to another,
Always aware of the whole.
The clouds pass over the volcano,
Caught for a time, then releasing their rain.
The Southern Cross keeps pointing south,
Pointing to where we have been,
And giving us direction for what's ahead.
A wasp bites me twice,
Enough to alter my vision at times,
Traces of poison.
The body fights back,
And the mind takes the opportunity to explore,
New connections.
A blue bird sits on a branch, watching.
I watch, he watches, we meet.
Everything meets you here.
The voice feels free, chanting to the landscape,
Chanting to the sky and the trees.
Trampled on, walked over,*

*Quiet, do this, do that,
We are in charge here,
But we know you can't be in charge everywhere.
We are blessed to be away from the grip of the
dragon of terror on individuality.
Our ensemble reconnects with the biosphere,
We realize we are the biosphere.*

And a toast

*And a toast,
To our friends around the planet,
Clink — stainless mugs filled with white wine
and smiles,
To the hospitality of the biosphere.
Clink — a peek into someone's eyes.
The wind picks up,
And a toast,
To keeping alert,
And laughter,
Whatever it takes.
Clink to the right, clink to the left,
Bottoms up,
To all and everything.*

Hands pick mangoes from the tree

*Hands pick mangoes from the tree,
Carried overhead,
A tongue of black lava in the background,
Highlighting the greens of plant life.
Eddie climbs the coconut trees,
Gathering for our odyssey.
The crew of a Saipanese fishing boat
Roast a fresh-caught male turtle.
They harvest the sea
With know-how and respect.
Sharing stories and tales,
The coconut breaks open,
A fish, smiles, attention, as gifts —
The hospitality of true sea people.
Whirling with fire,
The black sand holds the energy of the day.
The moon plays with the sea's foam,
Meeting the land with grace and fluidity.
A cloud covers the moon,
The sea changes,
Dancing, dancing,
The trees, shadow puppets,
Dancing to the beat of the wind,
We dance to the stars,
We dance to man and woman,
We dance to freedom,
We dance to the sky, the ocean, life,
We dance magic.*

Mermaid mutates into fire goddess

*Mermaid mutates into fire goddess,
A dead tree comes to life,
A comet juggler plays with gravities,
Others with breath and beats,
Senses, oh senses,
Stocking up with the land.
Moonlit skins, firelit faces,
Fire madness, screams and shouts,
Totem poles ignited,
Visions, perceptions, projections,
The fire can take it all.
Wishful intention,
Keep the best,
Improve the rest,
Dance fire dance,
Incarnated in heated bodies,
Freed for a moment in and out of time,
New programs, available only on Pagan.
The journey of five thousand miles
Starts with the plays of Pagan's incarnated
gods.
Fire, water, air, wind, space, seas and seas,
Sky and skies, planets, universes, infinities,
Time after times,
Emotions, dramas,
Values, friendships,
The journey of five thousand miles
Needs to start with a ship of friends.
We are an ensemble around the fire,
With our wits and squeaks, and moans, and
rrrrrrrrr,
We are an ensemble around the fire,*

*Caressing each other with dances, smiles,
laughter, worlds, gestures, moods.*

Wahoo, wahoo

*Wahoo, wahoo,
Mahi mahi, wahoo, mahi mahi,
Tuna, tuna, tuna,
Bite the hook, bite the hook, bite the hook.
Come on, come to the hook,
We will honor you on our sea-people ship.
Wahoo, wahoo,
Mahi mahi, tuna tuna,
We need your help,
To feel real, to feel real, to feel real.
Iha, iha,
Pull in, don't give slack, keep pulling in,
Where is the gaff,
Come on, bring it in,
Oh, it's a big one,
Tuna tuna,
Thank you for your visit,
Do not worry,
Somehow you are feeding the sea,
Through the bodies of your emissaries,
Keep them strong, keep them seaworthy.
Wahoo, wahoo,
Mahi mahi, tuna tuna,
Bite the hook, come on, bite the hook.*

Sensual moonlight caresses the waves

*Sensual moonlight caresses the waves,
A child rises out of our mind,
A child born from the sea,
Can you see, it is always new.
Faces and more faces,
No wave is ever the same.
Sirens lament in the rigging,
Swells, from far away,
Beyond the glow of the lady moon,
A call, a call...*

The emergence of planetary man

*The emergence of planetary man.
Ocean connects us all,
Knowing that we are.
Everything is permitted,
The mind can know no limits.
As a spider casts her web, carefully placed on a
frequented path,
So do the ideas and memes of man,
Catching.
Some come to know the spider, and learn to
escape.
Then you watch for the web,
And leap all the way toward the one you want to
explore.
There's no way to live constantly outside the
webs,
But it should be a right, at least, to try.
Man, organizing himself, creates huge,
indomitable, energy-sucking dragons,
Fabricating the most complex web of all,
But as the webmasters grow ever more efficient,
So does the freedom explorer,
Recognizing the webs, finding new escape
routes,
Becoming more man, and more man, and more
man.
Here, right now,
A buzz in my ear,
Water songs trailing along the hull,
A valve keeps the tempo,
Floating inner and outer,
Attention to the one.*

*Then descending,
A line of attention connected around the world,
Time bends,
Everything I think, I think.
Watching, like a hawk,
Ready for all.
It's always dealing with the circumstances
given,
Using space.
I repeat, over and over and over,
Memes of my own brand, a cocktail for the
moment, to sip slowly sometime,
Or drink in one great gulp, for that particular
space, that tranquility that emanates from
consumed eternities.
And,
Start over,
Again, again, again.
And — one of man's essences — and?
The "ands" and hands that keep the motion
pointed somewhere.
Silver, shining trails of incandescent moods,
Hidden in every wave.
A single impulse can set a fire.
In this, learning also to play synergetically with
water, air, earth, time, space, matter, flow,
Learning to cook with cosmic forces,
Artist of the sea,
Sea of art,
Nothing but everything,
Now.*

Listening to our planet

*Listening to our planet,
Getting away from her cyclonic centers,
Where structured matter breaks, recycled by
the whole.
You can't rest for too long,
The sea demands all,
At your service and her whims.
I bow to the power of "nature,"
Too shy still to call it god.
Kujira taught us,
Now,
Acting on the teaching.
Another typhoon menaces.
Information gathered with the help of
technology,
Nothing in the sea or sky hints the beast is
coming,
Slowly approaching at six knots.
Keep the ship in the northeast quadrant,
I hear a small voice say,
But then again,
Keep as many options open
Before you know for certain, in mind and body,
where to run.
Don't confuse emotion with intuition,
Don't let any single center run you,
But let that center run in the service of the
dream's survival.
Sharks,
Respect, a fear triggered by subconscious
memory,
Respect for the survivor of geological time,*

*Adapted to survive,
Possibly the most efficient biological machine
our universe has ever produced.*

The gods are dying of solitude

*The gods are dying of solitude,
A god needs energy from man to exist,
It is his fuel.
Out of last resort he might throw a fit —
Can you see me?
Now they've grown clever,
Possessing man to create the most brilliant
sculptures,
Drawings, monuments, prose and dramas,
songs, and melodies,
So they might have some chance at immortality,
As long as man kept thinking of them.
A few lie buried now in dusty cupboards, or
hidden places.
Others departed long ago.
Some wait for the right time, the right place,
And others are still in the process of creation,
mutating, changing form.
As long as man talks to them,
Dialogue,
One of my gods is the god ocean,
Oceanic dialogue.
Typhoona, maybe jealous, decides to scare us,
Meanwhile the ocean stays kind, sending
messengers,
A dolphin leaping in the long, dreamy blue
swells,
Moving east, showing direction,
Offering us a tuna.
Typhoona, in need of attention, takes hold of a
few minds,
She's got a grip, and doesn't let go.*

*In this pantheon,
The alliances are everything.
My respect to Typhoona.
I don't wish to play too close to your mighty
powers,
I bow to your presence,
But long ago I gave my soul to the ocean.*

Long swells, the messengers of the storm

*Long swells, the messengers of the storm,
Dressed in deep blue,
A gift,
The sky above, a circle of blue,
Invaded on every side by dark cloud.
A few dolphins leap, a hello and a goodbye,
The sky turns gray, then dark gray,
The swells swell, wind picking up,
Forty knots, maybe more,
The wind reader falls from Eibes's hand,
The mizzen mast bends,
Xtine calls the shot,
Quick, lower, with full strength,
Arms stretched, every muscle contracted,
Together we pull.
The foresail flaps,
Lower.
Huge waves crash on the bow,
Knees under water,
Every porthole and hatch closed,
The wind four points before the starboard beam.
Contemplation,
Feeling privileged to witness such a face of the
ocean,
Beauty, strength, power,
We are small, humility and reverence,
Today the sea is my temple,
The dragons are fighting in the sky,
We merely catch the outer puffs of their blows.*

The show goes on, the ship keeps

*The show goes on, the ship keeps dancing with
the Pacific,
We are merely voyeurs,
The ship hove to,
Waiting for Chan-hom to pass.
Most bodies hove to as well,
Paradise's bunks full of sleepy bodies,
Senses sharpened,
Smells traveling the length of the ship,
Chocolate brownies advertising teatime,
Fresh-baked bread,
Farty smells from an overdose of eggs,
Sweat and damp clothes drying in Synesthesia,
Diesel fumes escaping the air vent,
All trapped inside,
We need to keep the sea outside,
Shake it all back and forth,
Et voilà,
The perfume of the day.*

The pancake priest performs his nightly ceremony

*The pancake priest performs his nightly ceremony,
While the navigator goes for a therapy session on the bench,
Mission Impossible babes, at the service of the cause,
While two old-timers in 2030
Rap about the past future.
Open sea, sharpening senses,
Open sea, diving ever deeper in,
To let out,
A cleanup of perceptory channels,
For better reception,
But watch the channel you tune to —
What you are seeking
Is also seeking you.*

Spaces

*Spaces,
The physical universe,
Bodies,
Biospace,
Cyberspace,
A new evolution,
With humans as co-authors
Of artificial intelligence.*

Mystic mist

*Mystic mist,
Time's in transit,
Nowhere for the eyes to exit,
Mystic mist,
Zone?
Going nowhere,
Being everywhere.
Mmmmmm,
The galley's alive,
Mmmmmm,
Frying drizzle,
The fish singing, can you hear me,
Flipped by the alchemist of the day.
Smells,
Escaping through the porthole,
Meeting the sheltering skies.
Swell's invade,
Swell's invade,
Slow, invade,
Mind, body, invade,
Ocean dream setting in,
Fluid,
Faces keep on smiling,
To the sky, to the moon, to the stars,
To the planet,
Swell's invade,
Swell's invade,
A caress from the sun,
A cold slap from the wind,
A caress from the sun,
A reptile, laid on the deck, taking in the heat,*

*While,
Swells invade,
Swells invade,
Body moves,
Body grooves,
Swells sensual,
Keep the body moving,
Swells invade,
Swells invade.
So many prophets,
Chanting revelations,
Illuminations,
Absolutions,
Revolutions,
Ovulations,
Caravans of thought,
Caravans of chemical experience,
Shake, shake it,
Lost in the seas, lost in spaces,
Lost, to be,
Reality is a game communicated in sensory
codes,
Resurrections,
Detentions,
Liberations,
Realizations,
Me, here,
Now, now, now.
I speak,
Ahooooooooooooo,
I speak the thousand tongues,
In the screams of salvation,
In the screams of simulation,
In the screams of stimulation,
In the screams of titillation,*

*All for a little attention,
Ahoooooooooooo,
Ahoooooooooooo.
The muses delight in my weakness,
Sirens,
Why not die in the sound of temptation,
Rather than resignation.
Nothing lasts forever,
But a kiss.*

We catch a fish

We catch a fish,

We eat a fish.

All hands on deck

*All hands on deck,
Bodies moving,
A samurai in the sky,
Hovering over the Kuroshio current,
Deciding, with his sword, to decapitate our bow,
Cutting clean through our foremast and sail.
Too clean a cut to be anything else
But the gods playing with our fate.
No one got hurt,
The shock woke everybody up,
We could have lost it all,
The mast piercing straight through the hull of
the Heraclitus.
The hull is untouched, as strong as ever.
The crew unites, committed to keep going.
The weather teases long enough to allow careful
weighing of thought,
Japan lures,
We decide not to bite.
The Pacific tests us a few more times,
Then lets us go,
Our biggest trigger removed,
We pass, humanly unscratched, through the
invisible gate,
Our good ship in great shape.
Onward, on our journey of five thousand miles,
Continuing our parallel odyssey.*

Twenty sperm whales' blows echo around the

*Twenty sperm whales' blows echo around the
hull of the ship,
Fog, a cocoon around us,
Beyond time,
Floating in a cloud,
Clouds,
Dream clouds,
Vision clouds,
Storing water in the sky,
Weather's fortune teller,
Nimbostratus brings rain,
Cirrus, beware,
Cirrostratus, rain to come,
Altostratus, sunny breaks,
Cumulonimbus, thunder,
Stratus for a drizzle,
Stratocumulus, dry but dull,
Cumulus, a sunny spell,
Cirrocumulus, undecided,
Altostratus, mutating,
Milky, fluffy, foggy, ripply, smoky, hazy, misty,
Frothy Pacific,
Steered by the motion of a thousand dolphins,
The right whale dolphin, finless,
White-sided dolphins, frantic,
Laughter, giggles,
The crew in rapture,
Interspecies communication of emotion,
New spaces,
The ship recharges,
And we feed on radiance.*

*A seal,
An open-sea dream,
A new totem for Xtine,
Laughter, comic relief,
Roars and flips and dances.
A seal visits, and performs.
The show, a success,
Full house,
Fourteen people on deck,
Moving around,
A game of seek and hide,
The bite-the-anchor scene,
Finally a flipper dance we can properly delight
in,
After clapping and a few encores,
Sustaining the humans' attention for a whole
hour.*

THE JOURNEY OF FIVE THOUSAND MILES

Waiting for Wind

June 19 – July 8, 2003

Indigo seas in ocean blues

*Indigo seas in ocean blues,
Turning gray, turning white,
Shading blues,
Motion, always motion,
Gods pulling out their brushes,
Painting with light through the eyes of man,
We are the canvas
That paints the sea.
Ocean reveals himself to himself.
Bioluminescence,
Galaxies upon galaxies,
Sea reflects sky, sky reflects sea,
Dolphins dancing cosmic on the bow waves,
Mind dancing the waves of timelessness.*

Sunday to Sunday

*Sunday to Sunday,
Waiting for the wind,
Teased, pleased, teased,
Waiting for the wind,
Fog, and fog, and fog,
Wishcakes,
Night Q-beam exploration,
Revealing creatures from the underworld,
Swirling jellyfish wagons,
Fluorescent eyes,
Hunted by seals and dolphins.
Meanwhile sea people play with essences,
Call the shot and see what we can dig out,
Transavantgarde, Homer's odyssey, summer
solstice celebration,
Main halyard block breaks,
Acrobatics atop the mast,
Adrenaline pumped in,
A trigger removed,
Visualizing every what-if...
Waiting for the wind,
Contemplations,
Meditations,
Incense to warm Nemo's loneliness,
A memory highway, full speed into the past,
Brought back to the present.
The jewels of moments,
Chronoramas,
Under the waterline,
In the safety of army blankets,
Away from the bite of the weather,
A seasonal chronorama of childhood berries,*

*First the blueberries, then raspberries, then
blackberries,
And late summer, the delicate wild strawberries,
closing the rama until next spring.
A circle of life, a circle of sensory navigation,
Still waiting for the wind.
Patience, a game learned out in the field,
Too much patience makes a fool of you.
Waiting for the wind.*

The captain can't take it anymore

*The captain can't take it anymore,
Pacing frantically up and down the ship,
Electrified by his own chemistry.
"We need to get out of here."
Time is taking its toll.
"It's just a matter of time."
A reality check on yourself,
The sea and the ship mirror it all,
Sunday speeches spot on.*

You cannot learn less

*You cannot learn less,
Says Bucky in my ear,
A mantra for living.
The French want to know what the glue is,
The glue is synergy.
Ship of fools,
Untamed by the establishment,
Running wild
In Pacific spaces,
Beyond compare,
Between times.
Who is steering?
Is there any who?
The black ship that got away,
Beware not to go too far,
Beyond the lands of never-back.
With space,
From sea people to space people,
The Heraclitus hosts,
At your own risk,
A soul that seeks the new,
A soul that seeks.
You will never be able to rest,
Evolution is evolution.
The sun is new every day,
Heraclitus.
Sea people dream,
Dream sea people,
People dream sea,
Sea dream people,
Dream people sea,*

*People sea dream,
We dream the sea,
The sea dreams us,
Mirror of our seas,
The unfathomable depth of our own inner ocean,
We dream our sea.
Dive,
Weightlessness,
The illusion of no gravity,
The sensation of no gravity,
No up or down,
With —
I am water,
Water is me.
Psychedelic realm,
Colors and patterns,
Fluid,
Fluid mentality,
Become the element,
Caresses,
Water's caress,
Skin in rapture,
Being one,
Being.*

To do, to do, to do

To do, to do, to do,

To be, to be, to be,

To do, to be, to do,

Dobe-bedo.

Silence —

Can you ever meet silence?

Sensual universe.

If I could drive straight up,

In under an hour,

I would see our home,

*A planet we should call the blue pearl of our
universe.*

Then, driving back,

I could tell everyone to go see for themselves,

*My words aren't worth a thing next to the
experience.*

A few men have driven up,

But not enough.

Once you've seen beauty,

You will never forget,

Once you know how to love,

You will never love the same way again.

I must confess,

I am a happy man.

The wind plays it well

*The wind plays it well,
Desire,
Titillation,
Despair,
Jealousy,
Spite,
Hate,
Loneliness.
I found myself in rapture,
In union with the sea,
Since I can only let go,
I might as well do so,
There's no need to cling to what isn't there.
You can never hit a clown in public,
Though his tongue spits arsenic,
A clown can kill,
And everyone will still laugh at the body.
Watch out for the wrong clowns,
They're the most dangerous creatures in town.
Learn how to tell the story.
What's the point of telling
If nobody's listening?
Learn to listen to yourself.
A barracuda crown
In the hair of the blue gaze,
Looting attention,
By ensemble, dance, kinetic beauty,
Lures the body into the dance,
The mind lets go,
The man becomes other,
One in one among one.*

Exposed —

*You can't hide from a dolphin,
Sonar pierces,
Sonar beeps,
Sonar transforms,
Alter the chemicals,
Reprogram,
Fakeness hurts,
If you're unable to strip the mask.
Dolphins,*

Can you tell me where I am?

Migration —

*We are migrating toward spaces.
The treasure is now,
Every point along the journey,
Every breath,
Every thought,
Every emotion,
Every cup of tea I drink,
Every word I speak,
Every song I hear,
Every sea I see,
Every memory I can summon,
Every cloud I meet,
Every atom I steer,
Every kiss I steal,
Every kiss I receive,
Every time,
Every space,
Every everything,
So the journey becomes inexhaustible,
Timeless, time-bound, and eternal, all in the
same breath.*

You can always look at the wrong

*You can always look at the wrong side of life if
you want to.*

*There is enough of everything to feed all of us,
At all times,*

All the time,

Wherever you want it to go.

The question is simply defining it.

Molding

*Molding,
Find the donkey,
Ride the donkey,
And let the donkey go.*

What if

*What if
There were no gods but the gods I create,
They are still gods.
There are no other gods but my gods.
There are no gods if I don't believe in any.
Light sparkles infinite mystery,
Your scent intoxicates my memory,
Flashes of splashes in the warm open sea,
Sensual skin, a delightful rhapsody,
Caresses, desire, the sun's ecstasy,
Lips and kisses in melody,
The undulation of kinetic harmony,
All dreaming of moon-shaped insanity,
My love overflowing toward your infinity.
My goddess, to me,
You are as
I see you,
For I can only see
What I can see,
And what I choose to see
Is up to me.*

Ready on the snotter

*Ready on the snotter,
Ready,
Ready on the sheets,
Ready,
Ready on the capstan,
Ready,
Haul away,
Hauling away,
Hands pulling ropes,
Feet going round the singing capstan,
Muscles contracted,
Together, pushing on.
Cease,
Cease.
A line caught needs attention,
Gets attention.
Haul away,
Hauling away,
Batten by batten,
The sail unfurls,
Gliding along the aluminum mast,
The parrels squeak,
The sail puffs,
The block moans a little,
Cease.
The sail is up,
The wind picks up,
The bow slices through,
The hull, caressed by the sea,
Delight,
Sending ecstatic songs through the hull,*

*To serenade the dream-catchers still asleep in
Bio,
A fishing line trolled off the stern wake,
Give me a mark,
Mark,
Keeping a good course,
The helmsman steers with the wind four points
behind,
Deck watch, every sense alive,
Keeping the wind sharp in attention,
Hourly checks for triggers,
Watching out for obstacles, and spectacles,
Fins and blows,
Any clue in the clouds,
Any message in the sky,
If you want to know where you are,
Simply look up.
The horizon plays with the eyes.
What's our speed?
Six knots,
Going east.
I wish, I wish, I wish,
Projecting,
The sea is glass,
The wind too weak even to name a direction,
The sail flaps,
Though we're in the roaring forties,
We've lived in the doldrums for two weeks,
Testing our patience now and again,
Trying to find its limits.
Still waiting for the wind.*

Expert hands on my knotted back

*Expert hands on my knotted back,
Heather unlocks the strain,
Another sea-people art,
Loosening accumulated tension and pulled
muscle,
A holistic natural healer on the North Pacific,
An albatross glides past the bow.*

She is a Chinese junk in ferrocement

*She is a Chinese junk in ferrocement,
Three-masted,
A night-black hull,
And a red deck.
Eighty-five feet of her,
Dancing with the sea for twenty-eight years,
An old lady with memories enough,
Dramas, sweat, tears, laughter,
Riding moods,
Creating her own legend,
Always seeking,
In a race against time,
To witness with her own eyes the extinctions on
planet ocean.
Two thousand miles up the Amazon,
Riding dreams and visions,
From Indian shamans, feeding her powers
beyond reason,
Around the world, tasting the vanishing cultures
of humanity,
Releasing dolphins back to the freedom of open
ocean,
Circumnavigating South America,
Reaching the continent of Antarctica,
Sinking in Puerto Rico,
Rebirth, and retirement in Belize,
Brought back to life to fulfill her destiny,
Coral reefs around the world,
Evolving humans,
Dreaming, and giving birth to sea people,
She meets challenges and faces them,*

*Creates heroes, scientists, actors, poets,
captains, seamen, dreamers, seekers,
synergists, artists, talents, sea people,
Without ever losing a human life,
For above all she cherishes humanity,
Never cheats, never lies,
Her devotees are rewarded with wealth,
The wealth of unrepeatable experience,
Unique,
Still humble,
For without the spirit of freedom she incarnates,
She would die.
Dolphins, whales, seals, fish all play with her,
And she watches with her two bright eyes.
She makes you wonder,
Brings you to rapture,
Tests your limits,
Teaches you to be human,
Tirelessly teaching, never giving up.
She brings mystery, magic, reality to those
Who can stand her honesty.
She is beyond compare,
She lets men dream, she helps men fulfill their
dreams,
Guiding,
She is the black ship that got away,
She is the black ship unafraid of getting caught,
For she knows that one day she'll get away
again,
Almost her curse,
Condemned to roam the seas,
She chooses her own home,
A flagship to the oceans,
A flagship to the coral reefs,*

*A flagship to the quest for the origins, past,
present, and future, of human cultures,
A flagship to sea people,
Always creating,
Her name is Heraclitus.*

Coral Reefs

*Builders of underwater cathedrals,
Coral reef temples,
Sacred space,
I salute you.
You, the little polyps and zooxanthellae,
The master architects,
Building over and over your predecessors,
For millions of years,
Never losing focus.
The kingdom of the reef has fallen four times,
Toward extinction, in its two-billion-year history,
But always came back,
With more vitality, more diversity, more shapes
and forms,
More vibrance than ever before,
Radiance,
One look at you and one is transformed,
Choked by beauty, an aesthetic arrest,
Gardens of sculpture,
Deep valleys encrusted with a thousand colored
stars and coral flowers,
Amethyst purple, turquoise blue, ruby red,
sapphire yellow,
In perfect aesthetic harmony,
Musical, colored symphonies,
Masterpieces upon masterpieces,
An infinite treasure chest of wonder.
Entering these oceanic cities,
With rush hours, and regular feeding times,
The ones that munch all the time,
The night feeders, the cleaners, the "sea
cucumber" vacuum crews,*

*Like shoe-shiners or hairdressers, cleaner
wrasses take one customer after the next,
Often entering the mouths of sharp teeth that
could devour them,
Two octopuses dance, transforming before your
eyes in texture, form, and color,
A herd of grazing parrotfish moves past, the
sound of crunching,
The cementing algae,
Holding the limestone together,
Sponge-covered walls and crevasses, an interior
decoration,
The citizens of the coral reef city,
Often exuberant,
Multicolored, multi-designed, paraded, flashing
their costumes to the world,
The wildest fashion show on earth,
One would think one had landed in paradise,
A world of perfect harmony.
But life is fierce on the reef,
Competitive, ruthless,
Each little polyp's tentacles armed with
batteries of stinging cells,
All carnivores, designed to seize their prey,
Feeding on everything that passes over them,
Some wage chemical warfare to kill and drive
off invaders,
Some use poison to paralyze prey before
devouring it,
The scorpionfish relies on camouflage,
Motionless, most of the time,
Then, suddenly, at the speed of light, strikes,
Only to resume his posture as though nothing
happened,
Mass invasions threaten every one,*

*When armies of the coral's enemy number one,
Acanthaster planci, the crown-of-thorns, march
on,
Night and day sucking the living flesh of coral
colonies,
Leaving fields of dead skeleton.
Plagues of disease decimate whole species,
Black-band disease, viruses,
Infections,
Thermal change, coral bleaching, often dying,
The reef relies on an eternal dance of life and
death,
As soon as it's created, forces try to destroy it,
Typhoons ripping reefs apart,
Then the little polyps and zooxanthellae
Come in to rebuild.
And soon the reef takes shape again,
An endless circle, one that worked until...
The worst of them all decided to tamper with
the biological rhythm,
The cosmic tempo,
Destroying faster than any typhoon, crown-of-
thorns, or plague combined,
Chemical waste, dynamite, poisons like cyanide,
Keeping a few reef fish in a tank for private
entertainment,
Scooping up everything alive for miles and
miles,
A genocide of life,
None the less, the little polyps and
zooxanthellae
Keep on building,
Repairing,
Erecting their cathedrals, temples, and
monuments,
Never giving up.*

*In that spirit,
They will probably outlast man,
Building and rebuilding long after the virus that
created the virus that exterminated them.*

Twenty sperm whale blows echo on the

*Twenty sperm whale blows echo on the hull of
the ship,
Thousands of dolphins leaping, dancing the sea,
Right whale dolphins, finless, ride the bow
wave,
Bioluminescent trails of tail and motion,
Careless, caressing bodies making love,
But above all,
Here they come,
Tall, towering dorsal fins, erect toward the
stars,
Slicing through the wave,
The orca commands respect.
The fastest, fiercest, smartest creature of all,
Feared around the oceans,
The orca rules the seas.
Nothing compares to the bearing of a male orca,
Surfacing at the head of his pod, proud,
With the arrogance of invincibility,
Undisputed.
Behind him, more fins, more blows, more
breaches,
Revealing the elegance and unity of the whole
pod,
They move on.
Long after, their spirit remains,
In the legends of our odyssey,
The orca enters our dreams,
Patience, till our next meeting,
The orca have come.*

How far do we have to go

*How far do we have to go to realize?
Should we send everyone to sea,
Like the Thai send their young to monasteries?
Fewer and fewer men live with the sea,
The age of clippers, traders, sailors,
An art of the past now, with few survivors,
A culture on the brink of extinction,
Because it's grown hard, nowadays, to survive
by it,
Trading can't compete anymore with the big
dragons.
What to do?
The sea reveals it all,
Good and bad,
Until you realize good and bad don't really exist.
We choose.*

Would you want to live in a

*Would you want to live in a world without color?
The revolution the reefs created in the world
Is not yet understood.*

*The impact of the fluidity of color, design,
shape, form*

On art extends beyond reason.

*Millions of people attempt to reproduce, in
miniature,*

*The world of the reef, via aquarium,
A fish in a bowl.*

*From a fish in a bowl probably came biospheres,
With the lesson that life goes on,*

Finds a way,

With or without man.

*And man should think of himself as staying on
the life train,*

We are its last wagons,

We will not be the last forever,

But we might not stay attached to the train,

*If we keep hammering, molesting, abusing,
exterminating the other wagons,*

The mechanics will find a way to stop us,

*Sending armies against our own wagon, our
own body,*

Viruses, plagues, geological disaster,

*Or simply not having to create any, since we're
already doing it ourselves.*

The reef becomes a magnifying glass,

Held up to the collective stupidity of a species,

Taking over blindly.

*And yet the individual members of that species
evolve,*

*Create new alliances,
Create new dreams.
The dream of seeing an end to the destruction of
the world's reefs,
A necessary dream,
The more who share the dream,
The more real it becomes,
Infecting the mind of man like a virus,
By contact.
It's fine to want to protect what you love,
But you have to love it first.
So love the reef,
Because the reef is the most beautiful place on
our planet.
Go there,
Don't rely on a film, or a picture,
But experience it,
Floating, weightless,
Leaving the laws of gravity behind,
And fill your mind with your senses,
All of them.
Once you've seen coral alive,
You won't want to display a skeleton,
However beautiful it might be.
Surround yourself with life,
Even life in a photograph.
Life is what it's all about,
Life feeds on life.
Down, going down, further down, further,
High, high, higher, higher,
By going down to the sea,
The sea that can never run dry,
A heart assured of plenty,
Always enough for one more cry.
The great ride of the open sea*

*Is a ride through open memory,
Deep, going deep and deeper,
The sea refuses no river.
A cosmic emergency,
The biosphere under attack,
By the minds and hands of a single species,
That built itself an untamable monster.*

What is it, the color of an

*What is it, the color of an angel?
I ask because I'm scared of a silence that never
comes.
Tears,
Staying behind the doors of my eyes,
Not wanting to see the day,
They know that stepping out,
They will die.
Cry, sky, cry,
Wash with your sweet tears
The salt of my oceanic skin.
Fire —
Too close, you burn,
Too far, you die.
Artificial intelligence,
The utopia of man's intellect,
A mind that could be kept "alive" forever and
ever,
The elixir of immortality.
Competing with life,
Dying without life,
Racing to create robots,
The gatherer of information,
The engineer,
The bodies that perform the motions,
Harvesting the raw product,
Playing with biomechanics,
Keeping a few brains in plasma,
Connected to the machines,
At the service of the machines.
But as long as there is a tree, a fish, and a man
to feel,*

*To cry and laugh,
To create beauty with his mind,
Art will survive, for art is immortality.*

A peach and a lover

*A peach and a lover,
Blossom
Of
Sinuation,
At
Risk,
In
Saturation,
To
Memory,
But
Only
If
The peach
Is fresh
From
The
Tree.
Stare,
Smiles,
From man to the world,
A face,
From life to death,
Courage,
Of folly without remorse.
The buddha on the shelf meditates,
A Khmer scarf still mourns the past,
Climbing shoes resting too long,
And a spear gun,
Waiting for its opportunity.
Restless,*

*Engine on,
Sacrilege to teatime,
For no reason but to blaspheme,
Against the sea, and our own dignity.*

The ancient Greeks never needed to write

*The ancient Greeks never needed to write about
pollution,
Ozone layers, CO2 emissions, meteorite
collisions, or space travel,
Or plane schedules, or TV tonight.
They were too busy inventing us,
Laying the foundation for future genius, and
future madness.
We're here now,
At the foundation of the new future,
And if not today,
We can always start tomorrow.
The never-ending story,
Especially if you never start it.
There was a man,
Like any other man,
But he knew he was a man,
And that made him more than other men.
Words,
Blades,
Caresses,
Slow-burning spells,
Or shooting prayer wheels,
At our disposal,
To use,
Often abuse,
Abuse to use more,
Until it fuses
With the sound of the word.
Man is making himself out of words.
What does it all mean?*

Any takers?

If you can't answer a question,

*There's always someone, somewhere, inventing
the answer.*

Anyone for an answer?

Here we go, one story of creation.

*Here's another question, coming up on the
right:*

Why do fish keep swimming after midnight?

Here's a PhD for you, ma'am,

Just be sure to write three hundred pages,

And make it hard to read,

*So we won't have to hear the same question
again.*

What's God's phone number?

Not listed in the yellow pages.

If it's not in the yellow pages, does it not exist?

Maybe there's a private line,

Plenty of people wanting to reach him.

I hear there's a guy who takes messages,

And passes them on,

Though the list of requests runs so long

Your odds of an answer in this lifetime are slim,

So someone invented reincarnation,

Buying any god a little more time,

*Since he can't answer them all, and there are so
many souls waiting,*

*You'd better invent some games to keep those
questioning minds busy.*

*It took a million years to figure out you could
entertain forever*

With a few zeros and ones,

*Every mathematically probable combination
possible as reality,*

Finite,

The death of infinity,

*Therefore the death of immortality.
Confusion is a dish always better eaten hot.
Hey, what's in a voice?
Don't ask — start by listening.
Identity —
Give me an identity, mister.
All right,
But it will cost you your life, sir.
Okay.
Corporate identity number 3492, under the title
of manager of departmental affairs for physics
and poetic illusion.
Thank you, thank you.
On TV tonight, the wheel of fortune,
A possible dream, a way out of that identity,
Invent the sand, the palm tree, dump your wife
for some big-breasted Mexican goddess,
Only to discover she can't cook.
Lunatics on the run,
Looking for a full moon to justify their behavior,
But the full moon only shows up every twenty-
eight days,
Just enough time to pack enough dynamite
To blow one's own brain out.
Full moon tonight,
And here they come,
Bigger, brighter, crazier than ever,
The full-moon lunypolytuti brothers,
Live,
Without a net,
Here they are...*

Leadership —

Leadership —

What does it mean, to be a leader?

It doesn't mean

You have to be,

With enough being to simply be,

And listen, listening, listening, listening.

The eyes of a dolphin told me

*The eyes of a dolphin told me to go and see,
See where I come from,
There are worlds out there,
Beyond compare,
To be explored and experienced.
Millions of years in the making,
Dramatic geological events,
Volcanic explosions,
Giving birth to atolls,
Islands rising,
Islands sinking,
Storms and typhoons.
And here I go,
First the blue,
That blue that becomes you,
That blue that will color your dreams ever after,
That blue that will hypnotize you,
That blue that is the blue of blues.
Underwater gardens,
Reaching for the surface,
Piercing through to the other side,
Giant fields of acropora,
Forests of staghorn coral,
Branching out to catch every bit of sun they can.
The hardest organic builders on the planet,
Biospace ships,
Creatures that decided to return there,
And the polyps keep on building,
Indefatigable, relentless,
Garden upon garden,
Cathedral upon cathedral,*

*Animal flowers,
Creating dreamy seascapes,
Evolution playing with form,
Pattern,
Multitude,
Architects, masters of color,
The polyps erect their temples,
Relatives fill in the tentacular beds,
Surreal tables.
Half in, half out,
Relying on its bounty,
Man,
Inspired,
Feeding on mood,
Vibrant,
Transcendent,
Comical grace,
Miraculous,
Competitive,
Playful — the dolphin's eyes were right.
Aesthetic arrest,
Spaces beyond compare,
A fluid brotherhood.
Plague, and disease,
Fearless predators,
A dramatic universe.
And then man came,
At first playful, grateful,
Evolving with the sea,
Evolving in the sea.
The reef was brought up,
Ground and powdered for kicks,
Harvested for survival,
Revered for artistic experience,
An inspirational extravagance,*

*A meditation on our relationships,
A simplicity,
Until the balance tipped over,
Greed,
Grabbing, abusing,
While some still remembered
Symbiosis, and simplicity,
But the rape goes on,
Senseless, apocalyptic,
With bigger nets, and bigger nets,
Scooping, and scooping, and scooping,
Scooping up all the fish,
Never thinking of tomorrow,
While some still remembered
Symbiosis, and simplicity.
Meanwhile the blind extinction carries on,
Some still rushing to see
Before there's nothing left to see,
But a few shells on a dusty shelf,
Trophies of long-gone species,
Plundering the rest.
Meanwhile some still live the old way,
Taking only what's needed,
Calling out for rescue
With the blow of a conch,
The sea is crying.
Now the fish are gone,
No worries, there are still slugs to scoop,
To feed the hungry dragons of the cities,
A resemblance of life, to remember by,
Life before the techno-dragons,
Too late for the ones who remembered,
Still trying to live in harmony,
Teaching the art of living with,
As one with the sea.*

*Nonetheless the polyps keep on building,
Cathedrals and temples,
Not giving up,
Keep on going, little polyp,
Keep life going,
And going, more sacred places,
Come on, little polyps,
Keep building for our dreams,
Building in the name of beauty,
Inhabited by time-tested evolutionary survivors,
All living beneath the cities of the master
architects,
The little polyp
Holds no grudge,
He will forgive,
So we can still dream together.
I carry the reef within me,
Connected until my forever,
We are all connected to it,
Whether we see it or not,
Whether we want it or not.
We are performing, in this century, the biggest,
stupidest amputation of our own body,
Mutilating our own soul,
Senseless,
A genocide.
I carry the reef within me,
And like any real experience,
You have to be there to feel anything.
Sensing with our whole beings,
Our own beings,
More than connected,
I am one with it.
My body becomes a vehicle,
A transport system,*

*A medium.
Speaking of myself,
I don't like to be molested,
Though molestation is part of the world.
I am what I despise,
I am what I love.
I am born of planet Earth,
She is my mother,
I am her,
She is me,
We are, together, I.
I am falling in love with you every day.
Why do I choose to speak of corals,
And not of cars, or computers, or movies?
Urgency, a state of emergency,
Like a wound sending out its pain signals,
So the focus shifts toward the trouble.
The coral reefs are in trouble,
Serious trouble.
Who cares?
Letting something go, destroying it,
Is destroying one possible self,
Destroying potential,
Reducing the flavors of ourselves,
Growing poorer, and poorer.
I want to be able to see myself in its most
outrageous, decadent beauty,
And nowhere else but in my own coral garden
self can I feel such vibrant exuberance.
There are forces that, like a bad virus,
Sweep over us,
Feeding on color, mood, emotion, vibration,
Only to leave behind a straight line without a
pulse.
The coral reefs are going,*

*Oases of pristine reef growing rarer by the year,
What I call an essence reef,
Those sacred places,
Spaces that create their own space within a
person,
Not just to survive,
But to evolve, with as many colors on our
palette as we can find,
So we can paint our world,
Within the world,
With the full scale,
Never reducing ourselves,
Only ever expanding, as life itself demands.
Befriending life
Is befriending yourself.
I am the coral reef,
You are the coral reef,
Trying to save reefs is saving oneself.
The coral reefs are resilient,
They've survived their share of geological
disaster,
We, the new kids on the block of evolution,
Playing games at deleting ourselves.
Realities —
There are many games,
Played simultaneously,
Nobody wins, nobody loses,
You can't judge yourself, judging yourself,
judging yourself, forever.
I am a kid,
I want to keep playing with the reef,
I refuse to let anyone destroy or steal my toys,
I will not let you destroy me,
I am greedy for experience,
I am greedy for beauty,*

*I am greedy for myself.
I can have it all,
Why settle for less?
It's already there,
Why spend so much energy destroying it?
Okay —
Life and death,
Rebirth,
Destruction, creation...
But if we all play at destroying
Faster than the others can rebuild,
We are heading straight for disaster.
I can bite off a fingernail, but trouble starts once
I keep on biting, past my fingers, into my hands
—
How far are we willing to take that game?
I am the coral reef,
And I refuse to die.*

THE JOURNEY OF FIVE THOUSAND MILES

The Long Wait

July 10 - August 9, 2003

Once upon a time

*Once upon a time,
There was a ship on the open sea.
A seal, a broom, and a mop,
Performing a dance,
Building toward a touch,
Human hands entering the dance.
Songs of laughter,
Sparkling eyes.
Like a torero,
Bust hanging low over the side of the black ship,
Fingers instead of a spear,
The mop standing in for the cape,
Olé — the seal is touched.
The dance ends after two hours of nonstop
performance,
Everyone retreating,
The seal to the open sea,
The crew to the comfort of the mother ship.*

The song of the open sea

*The song of the open sea,
Ruthless,
Yet compassionate,
Hiding only means retreat,
And the sea accepts no one but her most
faithful, truthful lovers.*

We have been taught to put the

*We have been taught to put the weight of
unwanted words and gossip on the tips of our
fingers,*

*Then let them go, fly like the albatross over the
open sea,*

*We have been taught to troll a bait to catch a
wahoo,*

*We have been taught to eat raw tuna, dipped in
seawater, feeling the swells, becoming the sea,*

*We have been taught to spear a fish, catch a
coconut crab whose claws could take your arm
off,*

We have been taught solidarity,

*Men braving huge swells, breaking over a
treacherous reef passage, hauling taro thirty
miles through force-seven water to an island
whose garden a typhoon took,*

*We have been taught to play with dozens of
children underwater, without a word, only
laughter,*

We have been taught simplicity,

In the art of a canoe,

*We have heard the songs that call the wind, on a
carved and painted canoe under pandanus sails,*

*We have been taught to sail outrigger canoes,
catching fish, calling dolphins, refusing to give
up on a broken mast, navigating reefs to meet
the Heraclitus eye to eye,*

*We have been taught by the reefs themselves,
Arresting time,*

*Finding, for a moment, the elixir of immortality,
Like Gilgamesh, at the very origin,*

*We have been told stories of white whales and
friendly sharks,*

*Of demons, spirits, heroes,
We have been taught not to give up,
Despite the deserts,
Reefs destroyed by the greed of man.
We have been taught to recognize the big
dragons,
The mad techno-dragons, feeding man worthless
goods in exchange for precious life,
A bad trade, for the benefit of a few monsters,
Enslaving minds with cheap drugs,
We have watched beauty destroyed by the
tentacled dragon.
We created our own monsters,
Let them loose, fed them, enslaved by our own
emotion,
The dragon knows, hunting to exploit our
stupidity,
Feeding on our greed, our vanity,
The monster we made is eating us,
Killing values, replacing them with
Cars dumped over five miles of road, traffic jams
on a tiny island,
Unable to walk without breathing fumes,
Yet still walking faster,
Between piles of dumped trash,
Too drunk on imported beer to see
Nothing left of the reef but a spoiled cemetery
Of algae and oil spill.
The crown-of-thorns is a villain, sucking live
polyps down to dead skeleton,
But it works within a balance of death and
rebirth,
Nothing compares to the big dragon,
Sucking life at a continental scale,
Infiltrating the last sacred spaces.
We scout, and scout,*

*And dig, and dig,
Like miners, hunting jewels,
We've dived thousands of hours,
Everywhere, without prejudice,
Just to see,
Because if you want to see something, you have
to be there,
And we found jewels amid the apocalyptic truth,
Enough to fuel our hope,
We have danced with mantas,
Interspecies underwater ballets,
Swum with a hundred sharks in deep blue
canyons,
Dreamed with a thousand dolphins riding our
bow,
Fallen in love with magic reefs,
So full of life that, for a moment, we thought of
nothing but rejoicing.
We have seen reefs recover from dynamite blast
within five years,
We have seen the same rubble dynamited over
and over, to scoop up half-finger-sized fish,
We have wept to see once-unspoiled islands
Invaded by dozens of tuna factory ships,
We have seen dead sharks rotting on beaches,
intact but for their fins,
We have heard of cyanide pumped into the
ocean, extracting a few nuggets of gold for
imaginary vaults,
We have seen transcendent dances and
ceremonies,
Sunsets and full moon rises,
We have been taught new constellations,
We have watched the stars for no purpose but to
feel closer to them,
We have dreamed of aliens,*

*We have seen inexplicable things in the sky,
We have seen inexplicable things in the sea,
We have seen inexplicable things in man.
We have felt the ocean invade us, possessed by
the spirit of our home,
And come back without any way to explain it,
We have felt small on the open sea,
The humility of being human,
And, too, the arrogance of knowing where we've
been,
The arrogance of knowing we saw the last of
vanishing wonders.
We had the last chance to see,
We are being taught to dream,
Dreaming of sea people,
Planetary people,
We have tasted a life of plenty,
We have tasted a life of freedom,
We have tasted a life genuinely full of life,
We now fear losing it.
It's time to monitor the damage of the big
techno-dragon,
By taking the pulse of our planet,
By taking the pulse of our home.
The reef will communicate with us,
A satellite, circling our planet,
Telling us of our own insanity,
Monitoring our fall, or our recovery,
All for the price of a single warplane among
thousands.
The big dragon doesn't want us to know,
As long as it's only the word of a few men,
Easy enough to dismiss,
As with Biosphere 2,
But everyone has the right to know,*

*Everything's already here for us to succeed,
So why not let humanity succeed?
There's enough sight aboard our space-ocean-
ship Heraclitus,
We live too with a human group animal,
Testing how to keep control,
If that animal is ever let loose to become a
monster.
Without a monster,
Humans become individuals,
And the more individuals there are,
The fewer beings left for the dragon to enslave.
We chose the ocean,
As our home upon our home,
And what we see
Is our home being raped, abused, pillaged.
The big dragon, whore or advertiser,
Can conjure meteorite-disaster scenarios all it
likes,
Let evolution take its course, we will evolve
regardless,
But can we please keep the whole catalog of
choice on the table?
What good is freedom of choice
If we keep narrowing it down to this or that?
Wealthy — I want to be wealthy,
Why settle for less than all we can be?
Without the reef, we lose wealth, so much
wealth.
Why bother, for a few flowers?
The coral reefs are like flowers in the ocean,
And we are taking flower after flower,
Until all that's left are dead stems.
Imagine a world without flowers,
Imagine your grandchildren asking,*

*What is a flower,
What is a whale,
Can I see a pristine reef?
No, you can't — but once upon a time, there
was...
We are at the stage now of trying to save a few
seeds of every species,
Quick, the DNA recipe, so we can build it again
later.
What about souls,
What about the spirit of the wild.
A dolphin in a round pool is only the shadow of a
dolphin,
He looks like a dolphin,
Acts, sometimes, like a dolphin,
Trained to eat frozen fish,
Refuses, at first, but eventually refuses to die
and eats,
Dies anyway, of stress and melancholy,
Turning round and round,
With no horizon to see,
No predator to flee,
No fish to chase,
No friends but a few inmates as lonely as he is.
Dolphins in the open sea
Are the spirit of freedom itself, incarnate.*

A windless night

*A windless night,
Rigging squeaks and dolphin blows,
The moon a halo behind cloud.
Fresh memory of diving beneath a lone sperm
whale's tail,
Visions of Arthur C. Clarke's Rama world,
The space age,
We are as close to space as we've ever been,
Drifting,
Among alien intelligence,
Sometimes our own,
The frontier of sea-minds,
Contemplating life,
Our existence, the dream still becoming,
We are here,
Here is now,
Now will always be now,
Forever and ever,
A convergence of timelines,
A grid of synchronicities,
Keeping us wondering,
It is all happening,
A theater of every possibility,
The freedom of beings among other beings,
All in one, among ones,
Hacking your own mind,
To find its potential,
So many roads to eternity,
Regardless of death, or immortality.
Being, while you can,
Simply because we can.*

There has always been a reason for

*There has always been a reason for our
disappointments,
We are handed a fraction of hope at a time,
Just enough to keep us sane,
Just enough to keep us here.
There is nowhere to run,
Only our will to go,
Moving anyway through the universe,
At a speed beyond our comprehension,
We worship the sun ever more,
Since he must compete now with the cloudy sky.
The colder ocean brings new smells,
Another sensation for our repertoire,
New colors for our inner paintings,
More wealth for our memory.
The crew is dreaming now,
Each in his own small version of the universe,
All drawn from the same bank of data,
Every possible possibility,
Inexhaustible, for one mind.
Boredom is self-inflicted,
An inability to grasp the gift of simply being,
It arrives with satisfaction guaranteed,
And dissatisfaction is only ever a kind of
satisfaction itself,
The satisfaction of not being satisfied,
A push toward further,
A trampoline toward more.*

Walking through a sea of eyes

*Walking through a sea of eyes,
Few that you truly meet,
A flash, a second,
Eyes too scared to meet,
Too scared to look at themselves.
Behind every eye
Lies an open soul.*

In every wave there is a spirit

*In every wave there is a spirit,
In every moment,
There is an opportunity to play,
Play with me, mother earth,
For I am your child,
And your child I will remain,
Until you take me back from the stage,
Back, to create a new actor.
A hundred billion souls have walked on your
body,
A hundred billion stars among a hundred billion
stars,
Celestial bodies, inner and outer,
For every man there is a star,
For every star there is a man.*

Sailing, we are sailing

*Sailing, we are sailing,
Endless games with the sky,
Obsessive stares at the GPS,
Almost hypnotized,
The veil has lifted.
We are sailing,
Three points behind the beam,
Four knots, eating up the miles in the right
direction.
The Heraclitus stands proud,
Dall's porpoise joins the celebration at the bow,
We are sailing.
A cocoon of thick fog hides the horizon,
We travel in a bubble of time,
The spirit will lift,
A conscious acknowledgment to the biosphere,
The lows are piling up,
Pushing us ever forward,
We are sailing.*

Dolphins, Pacific white-sided, ride the bow wave

*Dolphins, Pacific white-sided, ride the bow
wave,
Togetherness in perfect synchrony, a parade of
waves.*

The ocean smells of the breath of

*The ocean smells of the breath of a thousand
dolphins,
The deck welcomes the dancing feet,
An ensemble celebrates.
We are celebrating freedom,
The moment that will never come back,
The Pacific, as she reveals herself,
Bouncing hearts.*

Traveler, exploring

*Traveler, exploring,
A new medium,
Like new sciences,
Reaching for the all-encompassing,
Creating with mind-made tools,
Synergizing,
For the new.*

Time out of time

*Time out of time,
Between timelines,
No past, no present, no future,
Every channel open, open, open.
Anything, out, in, everywhere.
An atom, matter,
Does it matter?
I am matter,
Matter is me,
I am not what I am not.
Yeah — without time, space loses all its hold,
Structure off into something spacey and tuneful,
Oh no, oh no, show me the way to the next line
of anything,
Show, show, all a show toward the unknown,
Good — I hear good,
I lost good, to find it all again.
An alchemist in the galley,
Celebrating the day that never was.
In, out, everywhere,
Albatrosses and winds of no place, no time,
Drop reality, since it's all real, all, all,
Melt memory,
The melting of time and space,
The melting of whatever you want melted.
Transform whatever you wish to transform,
Transform into whatever you wish to be.
Isobar 1060 millibars, opened,
A laboratory for induced alcoholic vision, no
prohibitions,
A cyber-tent on Synesthesia's Persian carpet
floor,*

*A rave in the isobar, the highest pressure
possible,
Techno and freedom lights,
The aliens are taking over the bodies,
Cigar smoke twirling,
Body heat, Kool-Aid our drug,
Chemical-producing brains,
Transcend, invent new chemicals of your own,
An out-of-mind experience,
In full-body mode.
The computer glimpses our past,
A snapshot of our own history,
A trigger for memory to strike,
A full-sense time machine,
The chicha brings you down,
Hands clapping toward human godliness,
Scenes from the same dream,
As human as we can be.*

Tolerance, for yourself

*Tolerance, for yourself,
For others,
Let it all pass through your body,
You can always learn to read it later.
Knowing the program doesn't mean knowing
how to uninstall it.
Culture is like cheese,
Some tastes good but smells bad,
Some smells good but has no taste,
Some rots too fast,
Some only gets better with age.*

The sea reflects all

*The sea reflects all,
The dread of a high gone on too long,
The sea reflects all,
The unspoken words,
The wildest fantasies,
The sea reflects all,
The flashing memory of old clashes,
The transcendence of a silver lining in the
clouds,
The dreams of a thousand minds,
The smiles of a thousand dreams,
The sea reflects all,
In the foam at the crest of a magic swell,
Visions of consciousness,
The sea reflects all,
For you cannot hide,
For you cannot hide.
She digs in,
To pour it out,
She knows your deepest secrets,
The ones you buried even from yourself,
The sea reflects all,
The desire of repressed kisses,
The desire of desire itself,
Emotional swells of light,
Creeping into the darkest corners.
The good and the bad,
The sea reflects it all,
To teach you that good and bad don't really
exist,
Everything simply is,
The sea reflects it all.*

*A time-travel machine,
We build our own.
A synergy of bodies and memory,
Inner and outer,
Becoming whole.
What have you done for our biosphere lately?
I love her.*

We are oceanauts

*We are oceanauts,
The voices of the ocean,
We are oceanauts,
The traveling bodies of the ocean,
The ocean wants to reach space,
Heard through the biological senses of
conscious beings,
The call of exploration,
The call of evolution.
Man stepped onto the moon.
The first step.
But a child doesn't stop after his first step,
He learns to walk, then run, always further,
And if he meets an obstacle,
He goes around it, or leaps it,
Or tears it down.
We are going,
Keeping the voyage going, and going,
But never quite gone,
Because we don't know how to be anything else.
We are born to travel.*

I hear so many "I want

*I hear so many "I want,"
Without a thought for how,
Taking for granted that the wheel keeps turning
out more.
I want something new,
It's crucial that we get it,
Just in case,
"They" can get it for us.
One voice says we,
The other always answers, I.
I am a spy inside my own world,
Keeping track of my own small fascist
tendencies,
Neuroses dressed up as statement,
Neuroses dressed up as behavior,
Mine, and everyone else's,
To keep the utopia of freedom as alive as
freedom can actually be,
Watching that freedom itself doesn't lock me
into a cell of its own making.
I am a spy inside my own world.
To know is the first conscious step, before
doing,
Unless you're doing simply to know.
Separation, only ever, to learn how to operate,
Never to live by.*

THE JOURNEY OF FIVE THOUSAND MILES

The Last Fuel

August 9 - September 22, 2003

Blossoms

*Blossoms,
Moonlit waves induced forms,
Taste of breath,
Grasps the resurrections,
Blossoms again.
Find your gems,
Sharpen tools,
And cut for optimal light transrefraction.*

Like a banyan tree, we spread our

*Like a banyan tree, we spread our roots over the
earth,
Feeding on saps of sense waves,
Melting into each other,
Crossroads at branches,
Bearing fruit when the season comes.
The fruits are surprises,
New tastes, new forms, new,
And when the fruit becomes too much of the
same,
We go on spreading even wider roots,
Searching for forgotten corners,
Digging ever deeper,
To bear new fruit.
Like a banyan tree,
A theater ensemble.
Expeditions to the heart of the Pacific,
Beat, the beat,
Earth blood, dispatched,
Clouds, monsoons, storms,
Organic soup, the base stock of biomass,
The highest protein manufacturer,
At the service of consciousness,
An expedition to expand our physical memory
with our planet,
Planetary man,
Collecting seeds for our new business,
The exportation of souls to other planets.
Dolphins, you were right,
Man's destiny is to become man.*

The Pacific is taking us hostage

*The Pacific is taking us hostage,
Wrapped around her calms,
The ocean demands our soul.
No price on our head but our head.*

Fingers feed on electrical sensation

*Fingers feed on electrical sensation,
A touch,
Longing for another.
She is waiting,
Slave to a touch.
The thin plywood wall resonates,
The heat of passionate embraces,
The breath betrays the tempo,
Covering the sound of friction.
The wall goes quiet again,
The charge dissipates,
Feeding eroticism to dreams in progress.
Paradise alley,
Sensual alley,
Bodies fresh from the shower,
Smells of scented soap and apple shampoo,
Hands caress the skin,
Bodies flirt in the excuse of a passage,
Two lovers' feet sneak out from the blankets,
While another composes rhymes for a distant
soul,
Clouds of fantasy float above,
Safe from escape,
All recycled.
Could,
Yes, I could.
Should,
Yes, I should.
Would.
No, I wouldn't.
Could would should,
Should could would,*

*Could should would,
Should would could,
Would could should,
Would should could.*

The whispers

*The whispers,
The tone of the whispers,
Confidence,
Or gossip.
Everyone watches everyone else,
Forgetting to watch themselves.
More whispers.
The eyes can't lie.
Hiding behind the glow of the lamp,
Flame eating at the edges,
Blurring, to soften the stare.*

Man dies so easily

*Man dies so easily,
Long before physical death claims their bodies,
Decaying souls,
Pretending to be.*

Where the wind gives birth

*Where the wind gives birth,
To the sailor's desires,
A hollow of stardust,
Man the man.*

A Note on Return

These poems end where the crossing did — mid-sentence, in September 2003, somewhere off the American coast. The fuller account of that ending is in *Crossing the North Pacific*.

Four months is a long time to have nothing much to look at but water. What stays with me, reading these back now, is how much came out of that particular emptiness — more, by far, than any of the reef-lined voyages that came before it. The sea, it turns out, has plenty to say when there's nothing else around to interrupt it.