

PACIFIC PROLOGUE

I first saw him in his natural setting
close to water, shirtless and sweat-shiny.
He struggled with long wood bones,
an ungainly skeleton
that didn't, that day, resemble a boat.

Nor did I, that day, resemble a sail
straining, full of hurry and motivation.
None of my plans called for shaping trees
to the demands of waves, or skimming wetly
over an alien surface. There was no reason
for building time frames around him, investing
my summer, learning the language of luffers.

Even as I deplored wind's briny bite,
the promise of his design curved its smile
at the sun. The shore shimmered with knowing.

Together we curved ribs with laughter,
caulked seams with sticky August, painted
the hull with September twilight.
I dreaded the launching,
watching craft and craftsman borne away
on Protean blue.

I think I would have clung to the keel
if he hadn't bound me
to the mast with a length of kisses.