IMMORTAL MARINER (At the Art Institute of Chicago)

His heart went out to sea when he was ten, a boy whose toys were pencils, brushes, paints he borrowed from his artist mother when his talent overwhelmed all her complaints. She realized he had a special gift that ranged beyond the limits of her palette. She understood he must be set adrift in years ahead. It hit her like a mallet. And drift he did, on times and tides of ocean, painting waves and windstorms, fishing boats, all drawn from depths of mood and shaded motion, capturing each moment as it floats on nuamces of sun and shadow scoped on spectrums gleaned from all he ever hoped.

With living colors cloned from old salts' eyes, the sea and solar secrets of refraction, his canvas blends a mix of gasps and sighs in peaceful themes and stabbing peaks of action. With loving strokes of light he poetized each scene with potent truth and inner soul. Now gazers linger, awed and magnetized by artist, subject, swallowing them whole. His audience, as always, loath to leave, collects before his "Gulf Stream" and "Life Line." They speak of artistry that can achieve such urgent feeling, make you taste the brine. Another Winslow Homer hasn't come to share such mastery of medium.