

Kim Roberts

*Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they
were alive,
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me..."*
--From "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" by Walt Whitman

Beneath a lazy whiptail of cloud,
Beneath that flimsy arc of white,
Under an eighth-month moon,
Where the strand arcs too in a mirror of sky
And each particle of sand grips inward tight and fetal
Inside its hard heart, granite and yellow,
Where the waves arch their backs and collapse,
Where the waves inhale then collapse,
And the wet curve is laid low,
Down from the shower'd halo,

Up from the white foam receding,
Or not receding, leaving its fallen petals on the beach,
Flimsy whiptail cloud-like arcs
Under the wing of a gull hunting her tidbits,
Surveying her beach kingdom, sea lettuce, limpet, moon shell,
Where any tinfoil glint brings her swoop and dive,
Where any updraft pulls her inland
Over fleabane and wax myrtle, over sumac,
Up where the air is cooler, where the wind quickens and revives,
*Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they
were alive,*

Away from the gnarled, earthbound complexities,
The thickets of hurt feelings
And the petty sparring of fashion;
Up from the hardpan where every foot is muffled
As if of no consequence, of no history,
She lifts her white wings, slightly tarnished, and carries
Under her hanging pink feet a windfall,
An earthly tidbit brought high and clear
To that place above the gridlock and worries,
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries

Above the North Atlantic Drift,
Above the hard stretch of yellow sand, the woman
(no stanza break)

Walking alone there, following the rick-rack of the tide-line,
following the gentle curve of the shore,
But not really alone, no, beachcombing for something unnamed
Something just out of reach
But part of her--I should say part of me, my doppelganger,
The shadow disciplined to my transmuted self,
Out of the salty, amniotic sea,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me...

[Mickle Street Review](#)

