

## Poetry Series

# Adam Fitzgerald

- poems -

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## **Locust**

For Joe Weil

His stone shoes tipped askew on the curb's hush,  
The plump of poor men's cheeks he saw bestow  
A blushing crown. Their rasped voices he heard  
Litter the streets with disreputable words.

And bottles break without sound of glass,  
The stench of memory's lips mouthing back  
A tattered kiss, a perennial bruise;  
Old ghosts compelling yet love's stupor.

Then in the resigned yawn of a moment,  
Its cordial pain unharmed by sentiment,  
Solemn litanies rose from the sewer's throng  
And hallowed ears indulged a pulsing song.

The sparse table and dusty crib reminisce  
No softer lullaby... His dreams grown numb,  
Melody orphans him again to sleep:  
Familiar bed he punctures like a drum.

Adam Fitzgerald

## Man Out of Sea

I built a man out of the sea today.  
Clay waves, hurricane flotsam and jellies  
Sopping into these palms' quiet caverns—  
I held seaweed and basalted sponges,  
Pellucid crustaceans, their brisk bones  
Bound by my tiring hands, then sculpted him.  
I borrowed undulating crepes that arch  
The plunging sea's wide diminished breast  
And fettled light the sternum, moldering  
Oysters off the ocean's bottomless muck  
Until the chest developed through to limbs.  
Concatenating a spine from dozens  
Of drying seawreck planks, the whole took shape  
And so I hollowed sockets, bestowed gold  
Searing from the sun's enameled margins,  
Horizons of no shore—this, for his eyes!  
From lichen clouds I whittled complexion,  
Soon my sea-creation refined, complete.  
Slicing the salty dune-crust reeds, edging them  
Forearm through finger, pungent coral caked,  
I combed a gaze meanwhile from crystal sands;  
Gathered lightning echoes, crabs' wires.  
I stored diggers' feet and other string bits  
Of the sea then tied these straws: a shawl of hair...  
The day breaks off. A beak's shadow scours  
The surf. Mammoth gulls crookedly careen.  
My sea-man stands stoic as the rich-silk sea,  
Moonglow, ink of veins; no gaps remain.  
What scuffed vox winds I'd caught are lost,  
With uncompromising choice I refused  
To give my man of sea a voice. He cannot  
Move—yet think of all the chaos up from where  
I sledged him! Now: mine, ordered,  
Scavenged-together, kelp-enjointed,  
Tangled with pier-net skins, barnacled rust.  
And so I built a man out of the sea today.  
How useless he is. Inhuman. Yes, beautiful.

Adam Fitzgerald

## Ode

Night air fragrant with disquiet  
And rusted stars  
Whose abeyance aggravates  
Gaping, dim rock-jags  
Trimmed in silver flotsam of the bay.

These same cropped rocks,  
Traucherous or bright aluminum  
Have circumscribed me here,  
Where I sit, situated in the dark  
Before unending cadaverous waves  
And their salty genuflections.

And what, among sluggish reeds  
Like malformed flutes,  
The wind's mild hymns and hands;  
Or this vacant bottle braying softly,  
What are you, beloved,  
Besides a graceful and polluted corpse?

From the hollow grotto of my mouth  
To the locked tomb of my breath  
I sing our song  
And scrape against the shore's refuse.  
(Its hidden mournful auburns, shells, shards,  
Each empty thing which it portends or tells.)

I sing your song—a perfume of was—  
And still you will not come, beloved.  
Are you the abcess of the sea itself?  
Surfeited from foam and riven from repose,  
I am owed more than the fleet cavity  
And plangent white chasm walls  
Which is your death.

Come then, with the breviary bronze of your eyes.  
Come as you came, mellow sunscortch of your skin.  
As your same form like a wreath about the night,  
As song spills from the heart's latch, flood and flap.  
I will not wait long.

Adam Fitzgerald

## Orizaba

for Hart Crane

The ocean's guilt gilded his own:  
    Surgeless, the propellers unheaved their breathing  
        Drone.

Waves—darkflecked as daemonic fins—  
    Mouthed pleas—the chopping weight of limbs.  
        Foamed discs

Thrown by starred refractions—  
    Olympian arm—pulsing constellations—  
        Anguished chants.

He didn't wince. He rested—rested  
    As each volley's strict fist slapped  
        Its fond death-welcome against his chest...

Out at sea the sun's alien sheen liquored  
    Iambic crests; the ocean's lid—coagulant wreath—  
        Sealed in dim descent.

The stolid ship, its bow rift  
    With bitter undertow, lumbered  
        Back—his own replete echo

Obscured.

Adam Fitzgerald

## Resignations

Inchoate lily fronds, and tawny gloss  
Splaying across a dim pond  
While dilatorily he surveys himself,  
Azurely lost  
In thought upon the water's rim.

Torpor-limbed, his face is half  
A mask of shadoweeds that stem  
And drape the cornered air. Still tendrils  
Of light bask  
Through foliated emerald fins.  
Echoes arouse a slim rush  
Opaque of sound.

Yet what may we ask of him, this Narcissus?  
Whose potted alabaster eyes  
Confabulate shade through amber —  
Whose frail heft of self sifts  
In fissures of supple tented waves,  
Their dark ventriloquy adrift...

I am eyes and stare alone, his  
Yawning image seems to say.  
And waterwed, he, as with the surface,  
Preens and stays.

Yet admit no matte of ebbing moonlight.  
No lush garland of earth fragrant from stars.  
His vision, two ribbons of froth, floats  
Splendid in sloth, ever unwinding  
Over clay moraines and tin fjords that crumble  
Like a lazy knee around him.

In this hour, slick of mud, where suns  
Are swallowed  
Like a mustard seed, willows flay, where winds  
Copulate spore and dander, he sees  
Only communions of colors sexed  
With wafting waterscents that are nothing else  
But himself.

No pure possession may be dredged.  
No blur or sulphur iris but his own.  
This ground is sparse, engorged  
On crags and parched, blank  
As if the hollowed rondure of  
An eye.

Adam Fitzgerald

## **Saint Christopher**

Striated in folds, his red gown flows  
Like a fire-muscle dipped to a flame-lip,  
While feather-legged, lame and limp his toes  
Writhe wearily wave-enrhythmed steps, chipped

Foot he crosses with, among gold minnows  
Mocking him in nimble dance, jubilant.  
Anguished, his brown eyes close in lead repose.  
And all is gold, barren and opulent.

O, cursed Saint, your finger-threshing staff  
Gnashes your gnarled knuckles the heat will taint  
As sky-linen soiled sags, the infant laughs  
And winds sift pitchless. But travel on, Saint,

Such eyes narrow like a craving chorus  
Of rocks, wound-worn and darkly susurrus.

Adam Fitzgerald