Necessary Light

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CROSSING THE SOUND

Far into the silver, the rolling hum carries me. Top deck of the ferry, at the back rail, I watch herring gulls ride updrafts, collapse on bread chunks tossed by a small boy in an outsized tee shirt. They whiten the gray with their noisy hungers.

Below, in the great room, others doze, play set-back, queue up for coffee. Leashed to a chair leg, a terrier starts yapping. In the sting of the spray, I am aware I am one of them, know I am not one of them,

know that beneath the waves’ patina, the unseen slides by in silvery shadows. I understand hunger— why the shearwater grazes the whitecaps. I know that, behind me, the wake stretches shining—a road I can’t follow. The rail I lean on beads with silver. My breath is a mist, warm, heavy with brine. Silver everywhere, evening on the rim. Nearing New London Harbor, I feel boundaries dissolve, and I’m the hundred tiny bells the halyards clink on the sailboats at rest. By the time night drops down its dull foil sheets, by the time I enter the mouth of the river, I am ocean and sky, gull-bone and light, I am salt. I am seasmoke.