BRIDGES OF GIVERNY

Creosote pilings of my father’s dock
are encrusted too with barnacles that sputter
bubbles of the green marsh at low tide;
the salt river laps and feeds
those living accretions lavishly:
they smell like oysters
and keep themselves open
for whatever comes.

When you write “encrusted”
on a picture postcard from Boston,
I see a pond piled thick
with Monet’s jeweled colors.

Blue-brushed white lilies float under
the bridges, encrusted with paints
of morning lights, red shadows
of a day dying in the garden.

“Ugly, muddy,” you write, but when
you walk away and look back from light
of real trees in a real garden, a window
in the room where the paintings are hung,
clouds shift in the dark glimmering waters —
ilusions of motion, this seeing
and making, holiest of mysteries,
the fully encrusted mind.

I write here by a blue light of sky
in California. The hills are golden.
I can see the Bay and the Carolina
dock as surely as you’ve seen
the Japanese bridges, the muddy
blues and greens of aqueous light—
pictures between us, cities,
even whole continents.