Antidote

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Other Techniques for Elegant Boatmanship

Triumph my poorly tied
knot, these inadequate

moorings and feel the choke
of sea air

somewhere near
the sternum. Brave Doctor,

Juan Gris never gave you
a body to break.

The suspension
of anchor in silt might be

vector, might be ache in crystal latticework,
but I’m no physicist.

Explain to me the body,
Doctor. Explain me away.

Excuse the machinery
of my ship—I’m feeling lazy.

Last night the dock-thief
combed my hair

with the legs
of ghost crabs,

but I didn’t chastise his perpetuating
the ephemeral fetish.

His juke-joint mouth stole my writ
and the bone I keep

under my tongue
in case of hazard.
The body is not so dissimilar, dear,  
to your ship—

but I’ve been rodeoing so long  
I can’t make a mouth of it.

I am that telescope owner  
moonlighting as interested.

All my paper wasps  
drowned in a tub of gasoline

and are now the floaters  
haunting the corners of my eyes.

If you can’t see,  
I’ll steer for you.

I’ll cut your hair  
over the edge so you can watch yourself

fall to pieces  
in green water.

You can check my pulse  
with a sand dollar’s echo.

My reflexes with a bevy  
of small, silver fish.

Here is my hull, Doctor,  
my galley. And I’m starboard

and we’re starflung, dumb bodies  
emptied of need.

Hungry gulls  
create our auguries.