

## Sharon Thesen/THREE POEMS

### BOAT OF THE DEAD

Matisse's white doves perch atop the birdcage  
and one in the hand permits  
a close examination of its resemblance  
to the Holy Spirit. *One woman's obsession*  
the reviewer wrote about every book he reviewed.  
In them was blood and repetition  
for no one can help it writing  
that way, a woman. She lifts her dripping head  
from the sink — excuse me, her dripping *hair* —  
and wraps it in a pink monogrammed towel. In the  
fairness of today's weather noon approaches  
and proffers pastrami on rye with a pickle beside.  
Scent of blackberries, ascending the path, scent  
of blackberries and squashed blond grass spread apart  
over earth's pubis. Right here  
the four elements come together  
with their relatives the horses  
whose long necks are exactly  
the right length for eating  
the grass. And when they look up,  
a white ferry is passing over earth's divine  
curvature of the spine, the traffic of self-infatuated  
commerce, goal oriented, dependent on radar,  
and missing the skin of something,  
missing touch.

## FOR CARSON McCULLERS AT 30

Crept the day sideways through the shutters  
and disposed of night. Morning coffee outdoors  
reading and having a smoke when a man arrives  
to take your picture. Your teeth  
feel suddenly awful, arms awkward  
in a white blouse on the table's edge,  
mind busy with the stranger who lays his  
suitcase on the doorstep & with a flourish  
produces a hair brush, a shammy for your shoes.  
Your eyes lock over their waxed & dented leather,  
the sky a smooth unpuckered gray, hot as blazes.  
In the garden the photographer lays his  
cigarette down beside some black equipment  
and squinches his eye to the viewfinder,  
his hat off, the gallant white parting  
in his hair lifting at a 40-degree angle.  
You give him the side of your face  
as if it were your last dime and he  
was about to spend it on a chocolate bar  
for your beautiful, sullen cousin.

## BEAR BRACELET

Silver bracelet smears the ink, blue-black, of my new pen  
towards a postcard of California. The squeeze being on, veins  
pulsate blue-black in the map of my back, wrists, temples  
thinking. The bracelet bangs along the table and keeps me  
company. If I joined a Sweat Lodge to sit and sweat with others  
poetry would come to me on the wings of a great bird but as it is,  
bear visage, Haida, ambles along pigeon-toed  
out of the bush. Blue-black veins crossing mounds of knuckles,  
mountain passes under the moon of wintertime, mounds  
of sleeping bears. Pressing on, in a direction,  
sort of, towards the great curve of beach, blue & westward  
of clear days & better weather — the waking bears  
stunned and thin preparing for the light.