

Patrick White / UPON THE SUICIDE OF FRIENDS

our green sails big
 with a wind
 called death
belly us
 toward the edge
 of this world,
and some of us
 are better sailors
 than others
but all of us
 lean into that one wind
 blowing endlessly
over the original waters
 of the mind. some
 I have known
hoisted their rough canvas
 and made
 a quick journey
while others
 afraid to deliver
 the truth
to themselves
 sought refuge
 in the rib temple
of leviathan. neither
 are to be thought
 less than human.

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both passenger
 and helmsman
 of their own lives
they saw
 from which quarter
 the wind blew
or felt
 the dark current
 moving under them
when the moon
 held state
 over the heavens.
only the man
 who believed
 a compass could save him
 was lost.