

## **Ship-wreck (For Peter Smart)**

The lee coast sidles closer:

crab for sea-room, lose by inches.

Calculate the squall's spume-talloned paws  
and measure off the rocks that punch their tops  
craggèd, in the waves' interstices.

The sound of the wind shines through the hull  
as if it were glass; the cabin  
is thundered in surf, and this familiar little tub  
is whole alive, felt every plank, in the anxious eye.

So, those most intimate of vessels  
wherein the blood is said to course:  
unregarded, 'till the night alone  
when it hums and leaps in ribs and ears  
and drags towards the instant of rupture;  
the life-blood's artery, pierced and splintered,  
a wave to stun a bull, and tumbling foam.