

Landlocked Crow's Nest

My childhood books painted the sea as a dramatic temptress
and filled my foolish dreams with swashes and buckles I did not fully understand
I was not clearly Ishmael or Martin Eden
but a muddled imagining of a sea-learned hero.
Ah, I can feel the years blowing past me in my land-locked crow's nest,
the great ocean of Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska,
frozen waves of brown all the way to the horizon.
Ahoy! In the distance - not a sea-spout approaching,
just the plume of dust driven up by Junior's old Ford Festiva.

Every decade or so, I re-read Mr. Stevenson's tales.
The first time I was Jim Hawkins, growing from mouse to lion.
Some years I became Squire Trelawney, so bold of spirit but shy of wisdom.
Recently I was shocked to find myself in Dr. Livesy's coat, as simply callous as a cat.
It is severe knowing I have dreamed past my days
and will never take my life out past the harbor mouth;
That I was born past my time,
and there could never have been a sea-life for me.
Instead, I jettison all those ballast visions,
I retire from the crow's nest to my easy chair
to drift out the remaining voyage among my books of fantasy.

