

Out past the sea walls--  
farther than a king's imagination  
but not so far as I have already been--  
lies the silver commerce of the east.  
What is a nation except coin?  
What is an army except labor hired?  
The Body of the Holy Savior  
is but a Babe, destined for increase,  
and I, the servant with five talents  
anticipating the return of my stern Master.  
Out past the sea walls lie  
vast lands hungering for salvation  
and I stand here, marooned  
by the unseeing pilot  
of a rudderless craft.

For ransom of this vision,  
I kneel before a dour king  
and his ambitious unsightly woman.  
I pretend humility I can not feel  
and reverence one so far below me  
that the slightest dream of my uncommon sleep  
would seem the sun to him  
had he the wits for mastery.  
I lay my fortunes at his throne,  
and pray to a God he cannot hear  
to speak simple consent  
into the narrows of his reason  
and be done with this charade.  
Let me only sail away

to all the world's destiny.

He thinks me too proud  
or too familiar, perhaps,  
and in his petty hindrance  
he holds the future hostage.  
Astrologers and charlatans,  
the banal queen's court,  
draw fine Castillian beards between soft hands  
and counsel cowardice  
masquerading as portent.  
The hours, the months, of seven years!  
Why would a loving God  
leave me to waste in this fool's snare?  
Why freight upon me this fervor,  
then anchor me in the shallows  
of my native ruined days?