

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?