

**[IN 1492, IT MEANT THE SHIPS
WERE TAKING WATER . . .]**

from "The Sea-Monkey Dreams"

In 1492, it meant the ships were taking water, & a delirium at sea
Had settled among their ranks; it meant a mass expulsion of Jews

From the kingdom & territories of Spain; it meant revolt, revival,
Amongst men with nothing to lose (& no land in sight); it meant

Logging less miles & the cruel hoax of light (upon water & wave,
Water & the misappropriated wings of flightless birds); it meant

Doubling-down; *then*, double-dealing, double-crossing—the dead-
Reckoning by faith alone; it meant Cristóbal Colón, the would-be

Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy & *Governor* of the said islands
And mainland of the Indies, misread Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli;

It meant that Toscanelli, too, had misread the maps & marginalia
Of Marco Polo, Ptolemy, &c.—& likewise, misread motion, stars,

The geographic boundaries linking land & ocean & land; it meant
No one could sleep & every abnormality was a sign of something,

Be it God, or the Devil, himself: an insurrection of birds & hanks
Of kelp (knotted over miles of ocean), some temperance of brine,

And rotting fruit, assuaged by whatever winds cut across the bow,
The leeward stars, the falling stars, the active volcano on Tenerife

(The largest island of the Canaries) throwing sparks into the night,
Like a blacksmith forging coal-heated iron into billets, into blades.

From the top-deck of the Santa Maria someone said, *Hephaestus*—
Someone said, *God* . . . the Atlantic took fire, *like a red Roman candle*.