

APPENDIX

The poems referred to in this analysis are copied below. Stanza divisions in the longer poems are added for the reader's convenience.

"For Elizabeth Bishop (twenty-five years) I. Water"

At Stonington each morning boatloads of hands
cruise off for the granite quarry on the island,
leaving dozens of bleak white frame houses stuck
like oyster shells on the hill of rock. Remember?
We sit on the slab of rock. From this distance in time
it seems the color of iris, rotting and turning purpler,
but it is only the usual gray rock,
turning fresh green when drenched by the sea...
The sea flacked the rock at our feet, kept lapping the matchstick
mazes of weirs where fish for bait were trapped.
You dreamed you were a mermaid clinging to a wharfpile,
trying to pull the barnacles with your hands.
We wish our two souls might return like gulls to the rock.

"For Elizabeth Bishop 2. Castine Maine"

Teenage patched jeans and softball—the Castine Common
looks like a cover for *The American Boy*.
My twelve-foot cedar hedge screens out the human.
North & South, Yarmouth to Rio, one Atlantic—
you've never found another place to live,
bound by your giant memory to one known longitude.
Britain's Georges rule your horoscope;
long live mad George Three in cap and bells,
king in your Nova Scotia, nowhere else—
a whitebeard, deaf and blind, singing Church of England
hymns he accompanied on his harpsichord.
"I wish I were a horse," you say, "or a Sicilian

sitting in my own Greenwich Village bar,
standing drinks... and never going outdoors."

"For Elizabeth Bishop 3. Letter with Poems for Letter with Poems"

"You are right to worry, only please DON'T,
though I'm pretty worried myself. I've somehow got
into the worst situation I've ever
had to cope with. I can't see the way out.
Cal, have you ever gone through caves?
I did in Mexico, and hated them
I haven't done the famous one near here...
Finally after hours of stumbling along,
you see daylight ahead, a faint blue glimmer;
air never looked so beautiful before.
That is what I feel I'm waiting for:
a faintest glimmer I am going to get out
somehow alive from this. Your last letter helped,
like being mailed a lantern or a spiked stick."

"For Elizabeth Bishop 4"

The new painting must live on iron rations,
rushed brushstrokes, indestructible paint-mix,
fluorescent lofts instead of French *plein air*.
Albert Ryder let his crackled amber moonscapes
ripen in sunlight. His painting was repainting,
his tiniest work weighs heavy in the hand.
Who is killed if the horseman never cry halt?
Have you seen an inchworm crawl on a leaf,
cling to the very end, revolve in air,
feeling for something to reach to something? Do
you still hang your words in air, ten years
unfinished, glued to your notice board, with gaps
or empties for the unimaginable phrase—
unerring Muse who makes the casual perfect?
(Robert Lowell, *History*, pp. 196-198)

"Skunk Hour"

I

Nautilus Island's hermit
 heiress still lives through winter in her Spartan cottage;
 her sheep still graze above the sea.
 Her son's a bishop. Her farmer
 is first selectman in our village;
 she's in her dotage.

II

Thirsting for
 the hierarchic privacy
 of Queen Victoria's century,
 she buys up all
 the eyesores facing her shore,
 and lets them fall.

II

The season's ill—
 We've lost our summer millionaire,
 who seemed to leap from an L.L. Bean
 catalogue. His nine-knot yawl
 was auctioned off to lobstermen.
 A red fox stain covers Blue Hill.

IV

And now our fairy
 decorator brightens his shop for fall;
 his fishnets filled with orange cork,
 orange, his cobbler's bench and awl;
 there is no money in his work,
 he'd rather marry.

V

One dark night,
 my Tudor Ford climbed the hill's skull;
 I watched for love-cars. Lights turned down,
 they lay together, hull to hull,
 where the graveyard shelves on the town...
 My mind's not right.

VI

A car radio bleats,
 "Love, O careless Love..." I hear
 my ill-spirit so in each blood cell,
 as if my hand were at its throat...
 I myself am hell;
 nobody's here—

VII

only skunks, that search
 in the moonlight for a bite to eat.
 They march on their soles up Main Street:
 "white stripes, moonstruck eyes" red fire
 under the chalk-dry and spar spire
 of the Trinitarian Church.

VIII

I stand on top
 of our back steps and breathe the rich air—
 a mother skunk with her column of kittens
 swills the garbage pail.
 She jabs her wedge-head in a cup
 of sour cream, drops her ostrich tail,
 and will not scare.
 (Rober Loweel, *Life Studies*, pp. 89-90)

"The Armadillo"
 for Robert Lowell

I

This is the time of year
 when almost every night
 the frail, illegal fire balloons appear
 Climbing the mountain height,

II

rising toward a saint
 still honored in these parts,
 the paper chambers flush and fill with light

that comes and goes, like hearts.

III

Once up against the sky it's hard
to tell them from the stars—
planets, that is—the tinted ones:
Venus going down, or Mars,

IV

or the pale green one. With a wind,
they flare and falter, wobble and toos;
but if it's still they steer between
the kite sticks of the Sourthern Cross,

V

receding, dwindling, solemnly
and steadily forsaking us,
or, in the downdraft form a peak,
suddenly turning dangerous.

VI

Last night another big one fell.
It splattered like an egg of fire
against the cliff behind the house.
The flame ran down. We say the pair

VII

of owls who nest there flying up
and up. their whirling black-and-white
stained bright pink underneath, until
they shrieked up out of sight.

VIII

The ancient owl's nest must have burned.
Hastily, all alone,
a glistening armadillo left the scene,
rose-flecked, head down, tail down,

IX

and then a baby rabbit jumped out,

short-eared, to our surprise.
So soft!—a handful of intangible ash
with fixed, ignited eyes.

X

*Too pretty, dreamlike mimicry!
O faling fire and piercing cry
and panic, and a weak mailed fist
clenched ignorant against the sky!*
(Elizabeth Bishop, *The Complete Poems*, pp. 122-124).