

*Robert Gibbons*

## **The Moving Fog**

Told her I thought I saw the fog move this morning. So later in the day on the Monday holiday of July 5<sup>th</sup>, when I thought the purple wrapper from Dan & Colleen shelved in one of the glass-drawer tables was a fine bottle of Napa Zinfandel we'd both agreed was the perfect accompaniment to independence in America, turned out to be paper alone, I went out for more. At Browne's on Commercial I found two good deals: *Eric Ross* from the Russian River Valley in Sonoma, 1998; *Martin & Weyrich* from the Santa Lucia Mountains west of Paso Robles, 1999, both Zins. I said hello to Mike, the fish guy, who'd cut a piece of tuna for me the day before shimmered in the sea the day before that. When I left, the fog I'd seen earlier in the morning moving, now surrounded me in this heavenly wash, a grace. All the tourists, whom we'd seen mostly sullen in the overcast on Exchange Street at noontime were now joyously laughing, holding on to each other. I saw one woman covering her mouth so the water couldn't get in, but under her hand I knew was a smile. I'd never seen, nor been in, anything like it, the moving fog. There I was at the heart of summer wondering what ecstatic surprises winter held in store.

## At Exactly Noon

Went down to Gowen's Wharf, again, the two of us the heaven of everyone's envy. *Seneca* still there, skipper working inside the hull, glistening wrench I saw him carrying out across the deck huge. Instead of the *Snow Squall* from last time the *Elizabeth* out of Boothbay tied up next to it. Paradisiacal down there with our portable chairs, wharf extension rocking on mostly calm harbor water, except for the *Providian*, big steel dragger I've seen docked in the same spot for the past four or five days with big diesels crankin', idling, for more than two hours blue smoke spewing, wafting our way intrusively more than now & again. Cormorant still fishing in the area surrounding it just before the five-man crew dropped her ropes (the bird skedaddled) at exactly noon over the side, & the *Providian* moved off with its relentless pollution, (giving us a better view of Casco Bay Bridge), to sweep clean what's left of the floor of the Bank.

## **Star Optimal**

*Star Optimal*, the huge blue & white tanker out of Singapore heading out of port. Say it, Singapore. *S-i-n-g-a-p-o-r-e*. 3:45, Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004: such a fine, brilliant, alternative to the rest of it all!

## **Talk of Love**

We talked. We talked about the view, weather, bills, walking, short or long, food wine friends, the fact that poets know that talk is Love, love tongue skin flesh bones hair viscera, & that even in the grave, at least, there will be no noise down there, as there is from the construction site across the way, but what we didn't mention, what escaped us, or avoided, was the perplexity there'd be no talk down there, no talk of Love, although we did converse about heaven found only there, in Heaven, absence of talk in the grave made us talk the talk eliminating every interval of chatter.

## The Health of the Harbor

Down here on Hobson's Pier next to the old steel hull dragger *Aaron & Melissa II*. On the cable from the bow to the radar tower they've strung an antique fish creel, I can only suppose for good luck. You should have seen the tuna flying out of Harbor Fish Market this morning, the Saturday of the long Fourth of July weekend. They didn't even bother stocking my hake, my cusk, just big slabs of swordfish, halibut, even red snapper from the Gulf. A whole tuna disappeared in ten minutes under the cutter's knife. There's a lot more money in Maine than one might imagine, especially at this time when the people with a second or third house summer here with the bread that goes into supporting that lifestyle. It's a lot more hidden than the poverty. Lots of yachts, busy island life. I got a chance to talk with Charlie Johnson, skipper of the *Seneca*, a long-liner originally out of Boston, he's really from Harpswell about 45 minutes north around the corner. He's waiting for Maine Fisheries to grant permission to head out, with just so many days allotted. He'll make runs to Brazil after swordfish & tuna, fishes quite a bit just north of the Equator. He got this boat nine years ago from Alan Whipple, but he's had other draggers all along, as well, *Seneca* now thirty-three years old. Charlie's in good shape, & sharp. Sure he complains about regulations like all fishermen, but he can also admire the way the guys from Iceland have adapted with their quick fiberglass long liners heading out & back in a day, getting paid a good price for that quality fish. He's among the last of a rare breed. Invited me to drop by any time, which I'll be happy to, of course, but just as happy to see the *Seneca* gone from dock, heading toward that confluence of geographies already alluded to. Shortly after that conversation I headed down to Portland Wharf, where the health of the harbor emerged with the flight of an osprey, & two seals fishing over near Vessel Services.

**Robert Gibbons** has published three full-length books of prose poems. His fourth full-length book of poetry, *Beyond Time: New & Selected Work, 1977-2007* will be published by Trivium Publications, Amherst, NY in September. He's had work in *Jacket*, *The Literary Review*, & *Mississippi Review*, among others, as well as work forthcoming in *Ars Interpres* (Sweden), and *Istanbul Literature Review* (Turkey). Gibbons is Poetry & Fiction Editor of *Janus Head* <http://www.janushead.org>.