

1971

This Deep

Marvin Bell

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Recommended Citation

Bell, Marvin. "This Deep." *The Iowa Review* 2.3 (1971): 32-32. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1241>

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THIS DEEP

What can't we say, and why not?
Is it these objects, such studied
couches and carpets wherein we sink,
the raised arm disappearing downwards
with its fisted message of going under,
as if this were water for smooth sailing?

The portside leans, the starboard leaps,
we topple the length of the rope rail;
the bell is hard in the wind, the wind is
soft and inviting and slaps us with a glove.
The glove is death, like the last of a costume
death makes it complete in this air, moving.

Death is moving.—We are self-conscious.
We have made this house our ship, we have
also seen each other as boats to come in.
From the death of the planet, which is a boat,
in this air which is a sea, in language
bubbled from the deep, we swim and say, “swim.”