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## Notes from the New World

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I've seen how the water  
climbs up to work at the keel, how it  
eases the boat off its landing. I've seen the boat  
tilting unattended on the lake, oars  
in the oarlocks, the whole thing  
tipping this way and that  
against log, stone, and breakwater.  
How the wind holds it in place  
while the lake kneads it and rocks it  
stem to stern against shore plucking  
small bits from the bow. I'm afraid  
someday I'll be out there rowing  
across the black gloss at dusk, listening  
to the loons, content, thinking  
this is all I need, when I'll hear  
some other kind of sound: water  
between the gunnels, my blue boat swinging open  
like a door.

#### NOTES FROM THE NEW WORLD

We went on talking into the dark.  
We were saying the same words  
over and over. Like children trying to speak  
underwater, I thought if only I enunciated,  
if only I shouted that word  
a little bit better, you would lift  
into the air yelling, "I got it!  
I got it!" We were talking into the dark  
as if there were a phrase  
we hadn't come to yet, one last word  
to make us understand. Yesterday, I watched a horse  
gallop up to a fence, halt, buck,  
and wheel back the other way again  
and again, as if finally, the intention refined,  
the fence would fall. Granted, in 1492 the sailors

sailed up to the edge of the earth and discovered  
the earth had no edge after all. I imagine them  
clinging to the rails, shutting  
their eyes and laughing  
when they found themselves floating  
instead of falling.  
They went on sailing.  
We went on talking. "A little farther,"  
you said, and I went on.  
We ran our hands along the seam.  
You stared at me thinking if only you looked  
hard enough, it would all come clear.  
I walked out.  
I came back.  
You said, "Let's talk about it."  
We went on talking.  
It was as if we thought we lived  
in some other world, a world where  
when lungs fail, the people learn  
some other way to breathe.  
Imagine, in need of air, your hands opening up  
to do the work your lungs have ceased to do.  
I would hold my new hands  
up into the light. I would place them  
against my ears and listen  
to the air lacing in and out of the web  
between my fingers. Imagine how careful I'd be  
carrying those new hands  
wherever I went.

### BAY MARE IN A SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM

In my dream of the last day, a large bay horse  
followed me into my house and up the stairs.  
The horse stood quietly behind me as I gathered  
my possessions: ice-cream bars, cigarettes,