50.

Peter Heller*
I dreamt the bay

Charnel night decayed to stars—mazy, bright
in groundsel Malvine stretched—

beneath the salt stiff blanket slept
she ran
dead level
ridden by a shape not man
that gripped her shoulders—
eyes rolled white
claws
waited there. My father prayed
nailed up the door “More trouble.
Jesus—” the scattered grave
of sticks, his own

Waited. He came. A cat
rock to rock
glided
turned on me his eyes

Above, the leaves—each star a shaken passage—
Looks the dun—whe—? Her aspen trails a broken rope.
Malvine springs At the tree the beaten
brush graveolent He gags.
Finds her in a shallow draw, netted on her side she gasps
quivers one flank raked with blood He kneels
her heat—serval—