
Jesus' Final Oration at The Last Supper

You interpret my clenched jaw
into geometry,
an angle leaned into stars, a law
for accidents. Not me.
Truth is, you know me less
than you know the sea, coral-hearted,
strung with weed and nets, fish
blossoming, caught, gutted,
salt drying in your fingernails.
That's the truth, confess.
But I am vaguer than your sails.
I am off course,
broken-compassed, adrift
on cures and indiscretion.
Turn right, I'm there, turn left,
still there, an obsession,
like trying to strap a harness to
a cloud. So just believe
in me as you believe in paintings,
oiled cloth, fraying weave,
poses tightening
around a table like this one,
corners chipped, backlit
as though it were a question.
Then interpret,
survey the scene, its damage
and its joy. Observe what's lost
in perspective: the rage
staining my lips, the blast
of ocean hitting land, the moon
still vivid in blue sky,
floating stone
resonant with the cry

of doves and anxious lambs,
wine dripping on the bottle's neck,
that line of ants who lift some crumbs,
trudge to their hole, come back.

-Michael Hicks