The unforgiving sea thrashed them
with such intensity
each man for himself, clung to barrels
like monkeys on branches
their tangled limbs under gasping bodies
men grabbed for the sky
like children begging to be held
the abandonment causing helplessness
from once strong men
much like the disease
that takes and breaks muscle
leaving a body limp,
or leaning or unable to sit up
as if the captain of my body
is leaving me for dead
the once strong deck turning to splinters
the sail leans crooked
as if trying to hug the mast
The once gentle clouds now cast down
menacing looks as if to frighten the men
and reject the outstretched hands
Waves becoming bears looming over
the weak and inferior raft, searching
for a man to pick off with one paw swipe
A man lies dead hanging halfway
off the raft, head underneath the
ocean that's as blue as his dead lips.

"Down River to the Rhyt"

1. I was going to tell you in time
an Egyptian love poem lifted from papyrus
my canoe

2. The river is a hand mirror in this light
Droplets fall from my papa
setting tones into motion—
sound waves through veiled centuries
find you here driftwood waiting for a chest opener

3. In the recital hall your shadow on the curtain
composer
your inclination to rest your bearded chin on your gu
my body your arm wraps around a lotus bud in my chest