

I thought I'd live on a boat
on the blue water

when the dawn rose up
when the rain fell down

I thought a little log
I'd slip in the fire

as the rain fell down
as the dawn rose up

I thought I'd row to shore
in a bright little dinghy

while the sun rose up
while the rain fell down

and I did.
yes I did.

breakfast is over

Mr. Great Blue Heron – here I come
rowing past.

Oh I know

I'm mad to love this place

but when the cormorant dives and red sails

on the horizon slightly move . . .

Annie

boisterous Annie
friend of Snyder, East-born Annie
blond pigtails, little house three floats,
long bending board walk, red window
curved roof striped wall ungainly tan
mushroom sculpture walls painted those
purple pink patterns smoke stack something
very happy very mad something
very glad to be alive.

Dudley

broad-chested shirt off boat-builder
eating supper off a tin plate, evening sun,
blond-headed tanned-skin hammer-wielder
long-thinker thinks about boat plans
revolution making love saw teeth
cedar chips broken hearts co-op planning
rainy-weather day-dreamer Dudley
cross-legged on a scavenged oak chair
eating supper off an old tin plate.

Rheingeld, meaning I suppose,
the Golden Queen,
where did you get that accent
and how do you come to live on *Manatee*
with Pancho Villa's black-haired grandson?

quiet on the water

oil lamp waking

fresh air on the bow, gulls

call for the sun to rise

but fog covers all.

Now the rooster crows
like nobody would notice the yellow sun
but the mommas of Gate Six noticed,
I can tell, cause four grade-schoolers
just ran by skipping and yelling "Hey,
is the bus gone? Come on!"
toting their lunch pails, leaving our community,
up before everybody,
to learn something about how shore people think.

Gate Six, this is where rubble is King!
Gate Six your gate is a small path
past the compost heap, corn husks and cantaloupe halves,
through blooming squash, petunias and lettuce heads,
over the itty-bit bridge to the meeting area,
by the Brown House,
between the ferries:

Charles Van Damme,
its hulking square frame
huge-beamed red paddle wheels,
and the two-stacker white *Issaquah*,
her lower decks submerged at high tide.

No straight lines at Gate Six,
sinking planks, tipsy floats, sunken barges.
Building inspectors don't even enter here past the sign
"Tourists — Stay Out: We Live Here,"
past the hot wires hanging along posts
the bizarre confusion
of square houses geodesic domes,
hulking tugs styrofoam floats flat roofs
peaked roofs windowless lifeboats,
the two-masted *Governor MBM*.
Dirty-faced stone-pitching kids all barefoot
pregnant mothers scruffy fathers
talking of weather and boats and beer and scores
and sitting round the meeting table watching
comers and goers day or night.

Scrap-wood fire in the cut-out metal float
the dogs
barking at strangers a rooster
strutting about flapping on an overturned crate,
at Gate Six
where the folks know each other.

Know where Adam ties up
where Andy stretches
where Jonquil wakes
from dreaming of marriage, dancing drums,
and Evie
sees the new sun on the water
and Ale
pours his first cup of beer
even before he opens his eyes.

The overturned skiffs.
The corrugated metal shacks
and heaps of boards.
The picnic table.
The idle chain-link swing set.

a mother in a long green dress
walks her blond girl to the bus
hand in hand

The masts, antennas, radio music,
"Mierda" written in green, trash cans,
this
is where rubble is King!
And we wend through it
and like it this way
cause it keeps out strangers.

And we like our privacy
and our little community
we like being a bit scary

we know what it's like here
and what pier to take
and what ramp to cross
and if you get lost when you come down here
 then please
don't come down here.

 Don't bother us with
your landsman's rules and shore ideas.
We got our own ideas by the water
and they suit us fine
just fine.

with no word

evening comes. rise

and light the first lamp

after the winds all day

this perfect silence.

is that a horn?