

Desert December

How then, uncle, shall I toughen?
This glint you see in my eye
is endurance
not hardness.

Our great task is keeping each other
alive
the spirit up:
some talk in evening.

This plot of land has harnessed cold:
holds it boldly in tether:
the leather creaking.
Draws it, one notch at a time.

Only a stone's throw from haven.
We move like fellows bound for the scaffold
in this
creaking cart.

I will be nobody's spaniel,
not even the wind's.
How measure a world when the very measuring rods
have dissolved?

I'll commit myself (like Antony) to this dangerous
vital sphere
in which shapes shift.
Christ reports a tempest in the almanack.

Yes, storm the likes of which I've not known.
Am I on that very ship?
or in this cart?
or simply on shore, with glass, tensely sighting?