**Unbecoming**

These days a salad garnish

can plunge me to the depths.

At the mercy of cook’s fancies,

I am disturbed by the salmon course tonight.

Translucent green triangles layer

prettily around the silver platter:

they glisten in the candlelight,

creatures flung up from the seabed,

pulling me resistless

to lie sprawled on the ocean floor

aside the frilled anenomes, their

cunning mouths. I am all

complaisance, sensing the finish -

but cards are called for; we must talk

again of rank and consequence,

until at last I take myself

into the old window-nook,

to stare at darkness. There

I am persuaded is peace,

where I might drift

through shoals of scattering fish,

soft strands of kelp twining my hair

while velvet crabs tip-toe the hummocked floor,

mapping their demesne.

Among the silent seagrass, I sway.

Light ripples,

rupturing the sea’s skin.

Into the blue a black anchor hurtles

towards me till I leap on the throat of it:

an iron plough carving through coral and stone,

jarring and recoiling but finally

gaining purchase:

thus we are brought to a gasping, juddering end.

Sea stars blaze in the groove of our trajectory.

Faces bend to me, expectant.

I turn from them to a glance of brightness.