

**POEM FOR MITKO**  
**Michael Rothenberg**

Today, when Ziggy  
(the dog) and I  
go down to the ocean  
we'll send you a poem

Some wild ribbon  
invisible soul  
birds in flight  
across chrome waters

We will wait  
for your silent reply  
Look for a word  
And world of peace

Riding back  
over bright breakers  
From your land-  
locked European country

\*

A Sea-Monkey  
I was born and raised  
in Florida

Learned my liquid life  
Now, I am pulled  
by the moon

Birth and inevitability  
Yes, the ocean  
Gives us power

Tells us the rolling universe  
Does not belong to us

No matter how hard

We try to destroy it

\*

Godless power  
Chrome waves

Sun's flames  
soak my brow

Ziggy stops to dig in the sand  
Barks at the blue-black raven

Calling from the stranded  
Boulder on Shell Beach

\*

I'd go crazy living on an island  
Surrounded by a fevered sea of woe

And sapphire horizons

I plan for a busier tomorrow  
But I can't get the ocean out of my head

*You could crave another island*

But whatever's there I can't describe  
Lupine, thistle, and wild oats

On the bluff  
Something I think I see, but can't

Imagination  
Inscribed in the mercurial sky

I wait for an explosion

\*

This is not a good year for Tyrants!  
Copper skies above Tahrir Square

Here comes that crashing thought  
That currency I sent away over the expanse

To be read by you, Mitko  
Tear gas clouds in Tahrir Square

Coming back tied and frayed around a rugged headland  
We have had enough of this enslavement!

Men and women, boys and girls with stones  
Give them what they want

Don't wait for permission from the headquarters  
Authorization from the Opera

Live long and without endorsements

\*

The dog still barks, but can't say exactly what he believes  
Is that a dragon or civilization burning on the beach?

Coming in or going out  
I can't tell which way the poetry is running

A wave followed by another wave followed by another  
A sleeper wave

Tide of the underworld rushing overall, blowing silver  
Over shipwrecked shores and tortured skies

\*

I asked the California badger  
on the road back home  
Do you find this dream amusing?

There was something vicious in his response  
Is the human condition just entertainment?

I ask the badger  
about Political gamesmanship  
and coppery metaphors

Slung across the heavens  
like Handel's Messiah?

No reply!

This is not a domestic animal!

\*

O, Brother from another great continent  
Beyond shimmering cataclysmic fever

Foam and light rushing up over my feet  
Mammoth rubbings on mammoth stones. . .

Oh Macedonian Brother

I went down to the ocean today and the sky and sun and water  
were blinding and gorgeous chrome, so I kind of got caught

in light and isolation and could think of nothing else.

12.28.2011