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High Seas, Jules Supervielle

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Like a naked child who has fallen asleep
In the midst of some elms.

Now nothing at all would ever more sway
This bow in its sleep, the marble violin.

Then it was that I heard, profoundly asleep,
A whisperer say: "Yes, you alone may.
Come hither at once."

H I G H S E A S

Among the swallows and the moons,
Mad phantoms of the undersea,
Apparent on the surfaces
In fancy phases of the foam,

Among the subtle evidence
And the traces, submarine,
Of a myriad faceless fish
Seeking their passages therein,

The drowned man searches for that singing
Wherein his youthfulness was steeped;
Listens in vain at seashells ringing,
Then drops them in the somber deeps.

J U L E S S U P E R V I E L L E

Translated by ROSAMUND DARGAN THOMSON

T W O P O E M S

T O T H E P O E T , C L A Y T O N S T A F F O R D ,
F O R H I S V E R S E

O measured line and sure,
The fact too hard to face
We cherish and endure
Through thine ennobling grace.