

Cancun Beach, Mexico

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What kind of God has made this sapphire tide
stroking the white sand mouth of Yucatan,
outrageously extravagant, a place
fit for the baptism of God or kings

and yet has made the lizard-woman, begging
before the church's splintered threshold, curled,
diseased, her hand a darting tongue for coins,
who made me also, stepping over her

in my designer jeans and gold-chained neck?
I look beyond the pierce of yellow eyes
thinking: to feed her begging is no help,
she made her bed, now let her lie in it.

The church is dark and whispering with nuns
shuffling in shadows. Sallow candles light
a waxen, dying christ hanging above
a garish mash of dusty plastic flowers.

Holy water, wash me; sanctify
this golden blessedness that weighs my neck.
What have we done to be sapphires or lizards,
smooth or splintered, stars or stones?

Seagulls don't know about inequities
running sores, gold stiff necks — they're beggars
feeding, as we, on the refuse of a world
washed with the mercy of His frightful beauty,

a world of splashed vermilion on a dark sky,
wasted and waiting for that one whose wings
will pierce the sky, reckless as they
and spill the raging sunsets on the world.