

## **POEM FOR BOB GRAF**

by Jim Forest

BOB GRAF I look at you  
my eyes can  
see only a face aboard a creaking  
whaler out of Nantucket in  
1830.

Something in your eyes cold and  
harsh as sea when (the night  
gray as prison blankets) waves turn fist  
yet you have a smile warm as fire  
beneath the melting kettles in which whales turn light.

Your beard (black as the galley ceiling) an  
axe of shining wind-tried curls  
face sharp as iceberg edge

at night a lamp pours out its heat  
in yellow ripples holding together  
a circle of men  
shadows fall backward, stumble overboard  
at deck's edge.

Your voice (low  
coming like gusts of wind from a distant place)  
tells stories of times to come, past harpoons,  
past splintered longboats, water-filled lungs.

Men, you say, will be free as sea gulls playing  
tag with spray, making love in sun-filled  
skies, floating on winds tireless as the waves  
of on-coming children.

Eyes tired of battle (one day fog, one day the  
leap of leviathan, the stench of burning blubber,  
storm upon storm; the hand of woman, the  
smell of warm sheets distant as north star)  
absorb an ember glow.

On Nantucket a girl sighs, turns, her dreams at sea.

## **POEM**

by Jennie Orvino

This water with the dead flies  
floating crisp side up  
to the sun, could be tears.