

Religious imagery will get you nowhere, they said.
We populate the cloud about our heads,
I replied, with characters and calls to action.
You can believe they are there for you, or not.
And do you so believe? they asked,
Do you believe God is such a circus tent
Encompassing all the players of your fantasy,
A plural target for your wit? Here,
Bent to my sin, the magistrate made his gambit:
Holding a cross for me to kiss.
I took deference, and mixed my literary references
Recklessly. I believe in the albatross, I said, t
The perpetual sign of sin and the weight I bear,
And death as release, though I am fully aware,
Given the surroundings, I may already be dead,
I added, stretched across some asphalt intersection,
A road, a modern road, they are similar after all,
In that both guide the distraught to
The determinant position sought by all homeless.
But you never answered as to your origins.
They seemed impatient.
They tell me I was found and brought in from that place
Where the sea meets the land, the vortex
Of the horizon where it all curls in on itself
Time, space, sea, sky, and that my true crime
Was resistance to my chosen fate.
They say I was found stretched across the highway
Stabbing with an antler-handled dagger, at that path
Like a wounded pirate might stab sand,
Like time stabs the hourglass And? (they wanted more).
And the doctor suggested this act might account for
The random gestures these arms make
In their sad attempt to reach for your neck
An enemy's loving caress from behind this
Vitrine of absurd self-pretense
This becoming a museum as
Both mirror and fence.