Prison Ferry Ride

(for Donna Meek)

Approached by ferry, across the water from the Southern side, the pale buff-yellow walls of the prison rise above the island in a cloud of trees, and for one impossible moment it is the monastery at Lhasa, radiant in setting sun.

Ferry riders doze, chat, read, or look out as they glide between islands and empty beaches. In spite of the clear sunny weather —so fine and rare in mid-January!— no one finds any of this remarkable, not even the specter of the great pale-blue suspension bridge, faint and distant, now twice-raised across the raging Narrows.

We draw near, then pass, two bundled men in what looks to be a coracle fashioned from old steel drums, an odd craft bobbing five feet from a lone seal, its dark head cresting in the water, perhaps barking, an awkward occurrence in the midst of a floating, disturbed world.

Joseph E Fasciani