

Solar Machine

It's oiled and ready to go, and its skin hums
with near perfection, all the bones firing in synch.

It floats in the same saline water that supports
what you desire, drifts back to shore again,
against some flesh-colored log or rock,
there applies its lotions, its greases and screens.

Smoke rising over the city keeps its distance,
as do the workers who live there, with no choice
but to breathe it in and breathe it out again, reflex
that gives them no larger share of the sacred.

The morning glory roars and shifts into lowest gear,
grinds up cliffs that define the beach,
while wasps cruise alongside, practically coasting.

You do not say No and cannot say Yes.

Other bodies race along also, double-clutching,
impressive, though nothing can put up a real challenge
to the sun with its superior engine.

And you hear the crickets finally run out of gas,
or do not hear it.

No sooner do the waves of this silence wash over them,
than the male and female swimmers stop struggling:
they sink once, twice and a third time.

When they surface again, your ears are ringing
with a significant history.

It gives a low whistle, while others near the shore
turn on emergency generators and sputter back
into one another's arms.

You bet it's electric.