

**Not Muscle Nor Bone**

Not muscle nor bone but battened,  
coursing blood alone, silt sheathed,  
can penetrate this deep canal,  
conceived for man and dug by him  
for trade on trade, for shanty shills  
and poled and driven bumping barges,  
to night-warm holes, hoving the handles,  
the latches, lurching on hatches,  
landing with cries and signal flashes.  
Full the shoreward banks with flood;  
soft the mouthword thanks for blood.

*Virginia V. James Hlavsa*