

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