

**Martin Robertson**

## **September Cruise**

**(for Tom, Les, Cecil)**

### **1 Aegean**

Traverse the beach, from your feet always  
a light-path on the water reaches  
towards sun, moon,  
fisher's lamp, recurring flashes  
of lighthouse beam. The path is always  
there, and your own.

Tread it... No. No bodily pathway  
this glittering skein the light-source casts you  
... and yet... and yet  
reaching you so, it surely should be  
laid there for you somehow to tread it  
with lightened feet.

### **2 Kea Lion**

Hewn from the rock  
huge he lies,  
relaxed and watchful,  
serene over the centuries.

Pirates and empires pass.  
Life changes and goes on,  
hard among these terraces of vine and thin corn,  
inescapable stone.

The lion lies, is as he always was.

### **3 Leaving Kea**

High on the precipitous promontory  
dark trees gather, and the white monastery  
looks east over the sea.  
East we fare, and the rock-bound dreaming island  
shrinks and hazes, and dreaming ghosts of islands  
rise half perceptibly.  
World is numberless shades of blue, breaking  
to greys, to silver, white. A light wind makes  
the flat sea wrinkle,  
suddenly kindles  
stars, firefruits fallen  
from the sun's high tree.

### **4 Syros to Naxos**

Today the sea is milk, milky blue  
hardly lined off from the milky sky  
except where islands lie  
hardly distinguishable through  
the bluish haze,  
the milkiness.

### **5 Occultation of Jupiter**

Above the dark harbour the crescent moon,  
and just beside her bright Jupiter.  
We watch them move  
slowly, inevitably, steadily  
together. At last the planet's fire  
begins to weaken, flicker, vanishes  
in night, marking the unseen edge,  
the moon's dark circle  
which joins her crescent-tips.

Then we notice  
how far, while we were watching them, these two  
have sunk towards the ships.  
We watch the crescent set,  
know her concealed companion setting too.

## **6 Statue at Apollona, Naxos**

Block half freed from the quarry. God hardly half freed,  
adumbrated in the block. He does not heed  
precise feature, upright stance. He is here in the block,  
itself still rooted in the quarry rock,  
the marble mountain. He lies below the face  
they chiselled back to free the block. This is his place.

## **7 Thomas auf Naxos**

Squatting on waterskis, a golden boy  
ploughs with his rump a furrow in the blue.  
The Sea-god, ardour kindled by the view,  
the beauteous youth doth cruelly enjoy.

## **8 Siphnos, Kastro**

Stepped and coridored the town  
white to blindness clothes its steep  
hill under the wrecked keep.  
At the white alley's end you look  
straight on sea.  
Stepping further on, look down  
where a church sits small, alone  
on a small promontory  
and the sea-swell swings its shock  
against rough rock.