

ANDREW MOTION

Ice

When friends no longer remembered
the reasons we set forth,
I switched between nanny and tartar
driving us on north.

Will you imagine a human hand
welded by ice to wood?
And skin when they chip it off?
I don't think you should.

By day the appalling loose beauty
of prowling floes:
lions' heads, dragons, crucifix-wrecks,
and a thing like a blown rose.

By night the seething hiss
of killers cruising past -
the silence after each fountain-jet,
and our hearts aghast.

Of our journey home and the rest
there is nothing more to say.
I have lived and not yet died.
I have sailed in the Scotia Sea.