

a fall from grace

she walks,
 and he follows,
 down the aisle surrounded by walls.
 the walls hold frames that hold paintings.
 Brueghel's *Icarus* falls into the water—feet kicking.
 nightfall,
 dressed in the sun's reflection,
 guides them down the hallway.

the ship sails,
 and the ploughman looks concerned.

they pass each doorway,
 until they reach the celebration room.
 continuing their procession to the bed,
 genuflecting at its feet,
 knees dropping,
 chins pressed to their chests,
 sign of the cross and up,
 their backs rest against the wooden headboard.
 they look up and out unto the altar
 drawn by the line that divides the sky from the sea.
 the moon awaits the blessing.
 she kneels in front of him,
 back to the window,
 back to the altar.
 the light of the eucharist traces the outline of her body,
 arms above her head,
 her reaching hands clasp each side of the moon,
 and she sings:

take this and eat of it.
 this is my body and it will be given up for you.

he reaches with his right hand open over left palm.
 she pulls the eucharist down with white hands.
 she places her hands in his.
 their bodies wind.
 they sing hymns
 and chants,
 responding
 to the sermon
 of the night.
 Brueghel's *Icarus* falls into the water—feet kicking.
 and they sing:

lamb of God,
 you take away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us.

the ship sails,
 and the ploughman looks concerned.

--Christian A. Carl