

## TERRA ANTHROPOLOGICA

*Elska* is not a word I expect you to know  
but to someone in Iceland it is love, which is also  
nothing I expect you to know, but means  
etymologically there is steam under the earth  
which may gush from its fissures any time day or night  
but often when no one is watching, not even the stars  
caring either, their white light glowing  
with an aloneness no one even knows to feel sad about.

Or maybe we would be floating there  
like John White searching for his daughter  
in our fragile *barque* just off the coast  
& for the first time in a century we would see  
the earth cracking its seam just a bit & the steam  
would seem like the earth sighing,  
& the waves lapping over the gunwales  
would feel less cold than they really are,  
& the mist like a  
tongue like a  
palm like an  
aureole  
like nothing after you've died would rain.

Oh! I know I go on  
too much, all  
gathered into the prow so we might sink,  
but I want us to watch & imagine  
in our human way  
that the light is for us, when I know it is not, though at least  
I am for you. Do you forgive me  
my fecklessness,  
this indolence of too much & too many?  
Inside, something touches my tongue that might  
be a cloud, or might also be just stone.  
Always this pressure under the earth must explode.