Self-Portrait as Ishmael’s Arm

—after the painting by Scott Kelley

I am not what you are thinking.
I am the hitchhiker attached
to my own story. The long-
shoreman of history. I am
corpus and metaphysic.
I am whale bone and tendon.
I am palmaris longus
and flexor carpi. I am speckle
and I am tooth. Hunger.
I am Inuit and infinity. I am
the hand of God reaching out
to touch Adam, His billowing
Majesty, the brain-shaped cloud
He rides blustered with cherubim.
I am spine and I am snake.
I am the ship disappearing below
the horizon. I am the thin trail
of the railroad riding itself
across the country and vanishing
at the wrist of the river
where black firs crowd
the bank and water spumes.
I am riding the whale of my own
story into the future.