

*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 carpis*. 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.