

At the Mariner's Chapel, Auvillar

St. Catherine carved in white marble, vigils
over the remains of a church once filled
with grateful gifts from sailors who thanked her
for their safe return. Today between a timbered ceiling
and the cool embrace of undecorated granite
mysterious landscape paintings grace the walls.
Scenes of fog, with dark hints of mast or bow,
yellow orbs that suggest sun, brown brush strokes
of bird feather, impressions of distorted angel wings.
The artist is reading a book. I approach to ask him,
myself perhaps too, how much of what has emerged
to shimmer indistinct on these canvases, was born
of clear intent, how much the random encounter
of paint and canvas — an emergence, absent
the strong arm of will. Where I wonder has the ego
yielded lines to shadowing, a palette of sun
and gathering clouds into feathering, flight. His reply,
tossed like a pebble echoes: *does it not all come
from the void?* Myself, at the well's rim, listening.