

the apotheosis of the modern bard

Open, Runner Up

when I was drowning
the dead poets threw me a
line with heavy metal shank
for plumb bob and mirthful
oxidizing bubbles
and a wetskin of green
snake whose ventral scales
made me helpless on land
and walked me tetrapod
backward
small dentition they
threw in after me whose
hollow fangs punctuate
pyrrhic victories of
venom and self-harm
and of that vestigial
tail they made a pounding
paddle to go gentle or fierce
as footless meters of
unwritten rhyme
for fire and oracle
they tossed a short action
tongue that I might detect
pheromones in zombie
kin dead for thirst
and take that! they
said of lung the length of
my body that I may partner
cold and deep and dark
and lonely
then threw they false
image for eyes but belly and
jaw that I might transmute
sound where fills the abyss
with silent witness
and at last I was cast
to the bottom feeding trawl
whose grinning maw rejoices
coffee table aquaria
and human voices