

Go Where It Takes You

by Larry Strattner

Neil Young told me, "Artistry is like waves. You're in a trough and everybody thinks you're gone and then you come to the top of a wave and everybody says, hey, where'd you come from? We thought you were gone."

"You have to hang in there." Neil said. "Go where it takes you."

I've noticed at the bottom of the trough my horizons are a bit limited. My drinking water's running low and I'm almost out of hardtack.

A gull lights on the prow and looks at me. The gull is very white against the gray-green wall of the water. He spreads out his wings and sails off into my limited horizon and is gone. There is a big white blob on the prow. I say "Neil?"

I go back to writing my novel, *The Middle Aged Man and the Sea*. Sometimes if the sun shines just so on the wave wall you can see little fish swimming in the water. They're going where it takes them.

It looks like winds may be blowing above my strangely quiet trough. Earlier I saw another person in a boat on a whitecap further down. Whoever it was didn't stay up there long.

I've written sixty pages. They're double spaced with an indent on the first line of every paragraph and the stack is held down on the middle seat by an oar tip. In them the Middle Aged Man becomes one with the sea. Neil told me, "That will not be enough. He will have to go where it takes him."

