

San Francisco

by Larry Strattner

Neptune's brush strokes

foam on gray.
Separating
scraggly land
from his windblown,
drawing hand.

Islands skip;
improbable rocks.
Refuge stones.
Sprouting trees,
grass to sit
surreptitious watch
crawling cars
cross a bridge to Fremont.

Icy, fog-scrubbed water
sheathes your frozen toes.
You wonder
could you make the swim
back from Alcatraz?

A dead whale drifts,
blow-hole bloated closed.
His singing pod has
paid respects.
Now are off
crooning back hastas and luegos.
Floating here behind
gulls will peck his eyes.
His pod is off to visit friends
in Tierra del Fuego.

City claws clutch tortured lands
futile dreams of permanence.
A tremor, even seven,
may dislodge a greedy grasp.
One thousand seals dive off piers
into solace only water brings.

These burning years
huddled masses flame and seethe.
Bridges fall,
buildings telescope within themselves.
Fantastic druid magic
incanted by ten thousand elves
abetted by the tunnel trolls
rend spider webs of tempered steel
woven by the men who are not real;
who slide into the sea,
peeling squealing fingernails
searching for a purchase
on sinking glass and money.

Fires of blue and red consume
wails of magnates perishing
lost in lava storms,
smoothed by gray white ash.
Memories of glory dashed
beneath relentless seas
rising to eradicate the stain
of whatever grandeur
may remain.

