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Wave-Rider

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Wave-Rider

Mary Dengler

Black-suited surfers drift silent on
Pacific waves, brace for coming swells,
Resemble black-winged fowls floating silent on
Midwestern evergreens, bracing for December gales.

Wave-riders form no education plan, shoulder
No worries of a working life, police shootings,
Racial strife, equality for gays and non,
Healthcare reform, housing prices,
Russia, Iran, beheadings by ISIS,
Refugees fleeing, boarder protection,
Computer hackers, arsenal inspection,
American dreams, investment schemes,
Political spinners, public sinners,
Living wills, tanker spills,
Best practices in administration,
Harvested fetuses for experimentation.

From beginner summer camp
To year-round surfer clan, like fowls
They neither sow nor reap nor read, waiting
Only for the next wave, curling. Through time
They float in clustered isolation, riding in
For sustenance or stimulation solicited, sleeping in
Some law-protected place, living in
God's mercy, unwittingly before God's face
And that of all on solid ground.

One such aging youth, in shiny wetsuit, toting
His well-kept board, wound his way through
Tables to my seaside chair, confident his golden mane,
His winged words, would win my heart. But just then,
Aeneas' ship departed Carthage; Dido stabbed herself
To see him go, and seeing flames above her pyre, he
Grieved that Fate and gods directed him away
From whom and what he loved, now dead, to fight
More battles, sail to Italy ...instead.
"Can you spare some money ma'am? I need some food."
I turned from Dido's blood-soaked sword, Aeneas' tear-soaked face
That brooded over boiling seas and toil to found an empire:
"What?" I gasped, as Virgil's epic sank beneath a voice
Untried by labor. A vendor hastened toward us,

Bearing fruit to quell the appetite that spurned
this sacrifice—"I don't want that crap"—and swearing, turned
To find another source. He wanted money for a hit
To make his ride transcendent, make his course less swift.

More like a fowl in isolated graceful dance
Than innocence, he'll drift from youth to age,
with burnished withered face, until, like blowing drifts,
The tides undo his confidence, bring his weathered frame
Permanently ashore, like ragged feathers on the snow,
To join other nameless residents below
An overpass, as Virgil sings again his timeless song.