

KA'ENA POINT

There's something about standing on the edge of a thing so vast ...

not so much the nesting albatross,
the sight of monk seal
or a whale's breach,
not for me, at least ...

no ... it's more the turning of my face out to sea ...
realizing there's nothing between a distant point of land and me
than thousands of empty miles,
and the mystery of what lay beyond.

As a boy, seated on Virginia's shore,
I often wondered what was on the other side,
if someone there was seated, too,
looking back toward me and wondering ...

As a late teen, on New Jersey's shore,
nights of making love,
resolved themselves into reverie ...
thoughts of Europe's distant lands,
my own personal lay begun there,
two generations before,
now nothing between it and me than a watery expanse – and history.

I've done that same in Ireland ...
stood looking west,
over the inky blackness of the North Atlantic,
an impenetrable fortress
yet, one so often crossed
by millions of emigrants
their choices few – an unknown future or certain death.

For a lover of the forest,
there is such irony
that my life has been so oft defined
not by this point of land,
but by the sea,

and not so much by it as by what it hides from me,
the secrets of a distant thing which lay beyond.