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Ruth Lepson

“cape hatteras”

after hart crane

the years have brought me here
sitting in my expensive house
reading hart crane's cape hatteras
and if you were in bloom you'd
know a place is not a room
time ago my then
husband—the word shivers past—
and I drove to cape hatteras
we had no reservations I remember
we found a seedy cabin moist
so filled with mildew we had to move
to some place else next to a diner
where have we come I thought but
next morning the dew was fresh
and into the sands we drove till
we came to a place where
light and water ruled all
the day was breakfasted my life was
fresh inside my self now I'm
old yet fresh I can't
understand time or rime or self
here I sit having done nothing
in my life except what I have
done reading hart crane's cape hatteras
he managed to write until
he could no longer
these things really happened
I will never see him again
you think you have time
to comprehend to try again

now it's coming back to me—
I fell asleep on the beach
while he fished I woke to see
the beach was moving—me
tiny crabs, thousands, had come
up from the sand to feed they

were moving sideways I eye
balled them and frightened ran
away driving
back across the bridge we saw
a manatee mostly dark with
white near its whiskers turn
over in the water this really
happened another day we
took tea in the english village
I forget the name I forget
what part of the time I was
happy we drove to kathi's
parents' house no one home
and thought of her back here
now I am filling in the details
from my so-called memory
my cat is nudging me to pet him
but I'm still busy remembering—
the play shown outdoors at night
about—what part of the cape's history
there was a boat in it I think

too many things have happened
and not enough has happened
God my hand is full of wrinkles
the snow is coming shortly
I prepared but worried I wouldn't
I could tell you about each one
of my friends but I'm tired
If I could do anything I wanted
what would I do be with you
granted I take certain things
for granted but those I miss I
think I want more am I sure
pass the sugar what I'm good at
I never do why do you
metaphors for instance come
readily to me but I don't
believe in them I believe in
creeley existentialism wish
I could write like oppen stones
water