Music

*Translated from the French of Charles Baudelaire*

Music often sweeps me away like the sea!

   My faint star calls,
and into the mist or ether, utterly free,

   I hoist my sails.

Chest filled with the bracing air that swells

   the canvas taut,
I escalate the towering ocean walls

   veiled by night;

I feel the vessel’s passion and its pain

   close as my pulse.
Fair wind or foul, every stress and strain

   across the abyss
will cradle me. Till dead calm mirrors there

   my own despair.
The Cry of an Icarus

Translated from the French of Charles Baudelaire

They’re happy, fit, replete, those crowds of lucky men who truck with whores.
But me—I reached up for the stars and broke both arms embracing clouds.

So I can thank those peerless ones blazing through the endless skies that I see through my scorched-out eyes only the memory of suns.

In vain I’ve yearned to know all space from end to end, its very heart; I feel my wings searing apart under some fiery alien gaze.

I offered beauty all my love, and burn for it, denied even this—the honour of naming the abyss which now must serve me as a grave.

Jan Owen