

Houdini

By Tom O'Connor

My
many lives
transform me to an actor. They fake
well my trade's fable, sway
every crowd with unthinkable tricks.

I
sink inside
a packing crate in New York bay. Stitched
inside: the key of her kiss.
I unlock the chain, slowly surface...

and
sweat ion-
ized air each time I bear their distress
on the stage; I smile, bless
them. Our doubt will drown in water.

Child-
ren quiet.
Each time I kiss my wife good-bye, her
tongue offers the key, sure
to hide it from those eyeing lenses.

None
can sit down
as I drown, motionless. They purchase
suspense, sweating to sense
their chains, their anchors becoming rust.

No
hunting bow's
black arrow, no matador's thrust
piercing the aorta's rush,
no 300-foot-deep free dive,
dares my impossible rise.