

[UNTITLED YULE TIDE]

*on the east coast in winter above or below the tide-line
one walks in water or in mud there is no dry landⁱ*

clam holes in mud
& sand— why not

look to that like the sky—
winter fishery

tradition says clams are common property
& the flats unleaseable—

birds try & fail to gyre— at least
for a while— the middle of the water is a window

the sky spangled with crows
a night body of water

serrated wrack saw wrack toothed wrack
dulse spiraled tidy into

a whole universe ⁱⁱ— bladderwrack
is a cunt in the granite —

textured uncertain driftlines
things aren't always so

conscientious as to draw
their soft edges for us

we move singularly like
a liquid — soft shallows

what if instead of horizon
lines we read low

drain tides boats soft aground the middle
littoral sugar kelp woven — I will never have

enough I say to your
sleeping inscrutable shape

snow on snow snow
on snow fallow waves

find your V goose

whirl the fuck up

warm winter windows

ladybugs on them

oyster comma

oyster ear

half a conch crown

clam fan light

my oldest hears sounds that I

cannot — including the sky

the sky keeps bright
eyes on us — we

look up into the cold
the tide makes

a friction like
a song in glass

that is the tide sings
while it spins in glass ⁱⁱⁱ

so deep midwinter the light turns iron
there is no end to your tongue

*at this time of a winter's day one can see
the light turn & begin to flake & burn* ^{iv}

& while it's a turn I always notice
something far away changes key

there is no perfect
line except the wrackline

which is infallible
it's too cold to do

anything complicated
come to bed come to bed come to bed

in marginalia season—

hawkless salt-hag

the tide adds or subtracts

a causeway— a lightening

line between the deeper

blues & though I

look with adoration at these

lines for hours

nothing comes

back to me

seastruck grid of skies

a whole year — more

skies than days ^v

in five days I saw

at least sixty skies —

gray wool — broken orange

glass — burning — oystershell —

gray cool — boyfull — clearing blue —

mirror calm — gentle cloud commas —

whirled up storm waves —

a calendar of salt & tides
& birds scything the full sky

it took me so long to write this
it's over — but that's

the way with everything we
say in unison with briny

tongues— tide me
over — if you put

something in a circle— no one
will want to cross it

I don't even know what's good
anymore— I only know

what makes a pause— even
the smallest stop in the relentless

present tense —
wery so water to wore

weary as water on the shore^{vi}—
the ocean told us

how we felt & who
were we to argue

—December 2020 - March 2021

ⁱ J.A. Baker, *The Peregrine*, "December 3rd"

ⁱⁱ after the work with seaweed by Jeannet Leendertse

ⁱⁱⁱ after Luke Jerram's acoustic installation / sculpture *Tide*

^{iv} J.A. Baker, *The Peregrine*, "December 21st"

^v after Mary Burger's *Skies of 2020*

^{vi} *wery so water to wore* is from the Harley Lyric beginning "Betwene Mersh and Averil"; the translation here is Eleanor Parker's