

Over and Under

By John Brehm

So sexy to slide under-

neath a river,

to sit inside this

snakelike sub-

marine-like

subway car and

freely imagine

the world above—

the Brooklyn

Bridge invisibly

trembling with the

weight of its

own beauty,

the East River

still guided by

the grooves

Walt Whitman's

eyes wore in it,

the bulldog tug-

boats pushing the

passively impressive



broad-bottomed

barges around,

and the double-

decker orange

and black Staten

Island ferries,

with their aura

of overworked

pack-mule

mournfulness,

and beyond them

the Atlantic Ocean

which I lately learned

was brought here

by ice comets three

billion years ago,


which explains

a few things, like

why everybody

feels so alienated,

and of course
the thoughts being
thought by every
person in New
York City at
this moment—
vast schools of
undulating fish
curving and rising
in the cloud-swirling
wind-waved sky,
surrounded by
the vaster emptiness
of non-thought
which holds them
and which they try
not to think
about and you
lying in bed in
your sixth-floor
walk-up sublet



on St. Mark's Place—

such a breath-

taking ascension!

imagining me

rising now to meet you.

Source: Poetry (Poetry Foundation, 2007)