

# 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)