Over and Under

By John Brehm

So sexy to slide underneath a river,

to sit inside this

snakelike submarine-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 tugboats 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!
imitating me
rising now to meet you.

Source: Poetry (Poetry Foundation, 2007)