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The Gulf Stream, The Desert

Greg Rappleye

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GREG RAPPLEYE

The Gulf Stream, The Desert

Blue water and a boat upon the water.
I could write all day and not change
what I see. Unless I turn toward the restaurant,
where a waitress sets umbrellas
over tables on the deck. She is singing,
and because it is morning and the harbor flat,
her voice carries above the snap of umbrellas
and the listless movement of flags.
I cannot understand the words
to her song. She repeats a chorus
and I still cannot make them out,
though I strain forward to listen,
take two pointless steps toward where she sings.

Last night on Southard Street,
we talked again about moving.
This island or the desert,
we both know we can't stay where we are.
When I finally heard you, saying
you'd move *alone* to New Mexico,
I began to listen, though life seems hard
wherever we go. We believe
there will be sand, we wander
from one state to another
and find there's not much there.
Bedrock, a scattering of stones,
the coppery scent of mesquite,
and the occasional desert flower: Crimson,
bursting into flames.