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VALPARISO

by Stephanie Sears

I stood by Neruda's table
over a sun bloom,
shoulder to his songs,
in his house, bright and foolish like a boy's,
tumbling down Valparaiso, floor by floor,
windows basking in the sea.

From his cornucopian tower I set off
west slashed with sterns and davits
to the dire bones wrestled from black rock,
hard blood of an island shaman.

I bounced the globe to invoke him,
bouncing it till I found him
born of restless craters,

hair in trails of night.

By noon turbaned red like a jewel,
By moon night marked his resentful face
with ferns and stars.

Up Valparaiso's steepness,
I went,
headlong down again,
a fog horn calling West.