

Deserter

A one-night stand, perhaps, but such
rousing from the mineral dead
can sweep you off your feet, rampant
waves from nowhere, their moonless pitch
monumentally desolate.

How many deaths can a dead sea die?

Thirst had never been an issue,
living with the salt itch, serenely.

But something cracks if what flows in
is strangled to a trickle. Cupped
in the desert a soul's parameters
start to shrink. Another few weeks
would have brought quick rains,
an ecstasy of wilderness flowers
but you couldn't wait. You tore
off your khaki shirt, seized your snare-
drum by the shoulder strap and running
to the water's edge flung it against
the sky, where it glints turning
over and over in my mind.

Dead Sea, 2003