

## At Saint Mary's Priory

Death comes like the sea,  
suddenly.

I have waited so long.

How long had I walked  
one with its salt  
breath, insensible of the land's abrupt  
change into cliffs?

How long had I stood there gazing  
absently,  
compelled by its swell?

When will I be  
enveloped utterly  
in the transfiguring arms of my God?

My hair has been bound in linen.  
The cloth is damp.

Its weight,  
limp,  
burns into my thoughts.  
I feel chill fingers  
search my wrists.

They constantly harrow  
the furrows  
that pleat my brow.  
Dozing in my mouth, my tongue  
is still.

Fanned by the slightest ebb  
of my breath,  
my lips are aflame with brine.

The Sister, a statue at the foot of my bed,  
is bent  
reading the breviary open in her  
hands.

Her lips are frozen  
in a rapture of faith.  
*In the midst of life we are in death.*  
The slow release of the flesh

*March 2, 1945*