

Hydra Waterfront

Contributed by Neeli Cherkovski

HYDRA WATERFRONT
For Harold Norse

Neeli Cherkovski

yes the water is perfect and
still, the Flying Dolphin
skids on the Gulf and slow
only moments before enterin
the harbor and gliding
to the waterfront, it's a rugged
land of rocks and whitewashed
facades

on Hydras the Venetian
palaces give supplication
to Helios, Jackie O visited
while I was there, and
your pal Leonard Cohen
saw "a bird on a wire" which
landed in a song, there was
the British expatriate who
painted his way into an alcoholic
dream. . .

no, I haven't been there
for seven years, and you
were put into a home
in Hayes Valley, assigned
to a room that looks out on a tree
and you loved to wander,
the attendants took care
to meet your needs

I'd come to see you
in advanced age,
eyes shining and
poems burning up
in a drawer, we had to
walk the waterfront
and feel the breeze

Â

on Hydra once
I made love to a
young man from
Salonika, (Hal, he had
dark, hairy legs).
we spent five days in a room
by the port, the chubby
matron who brought
us food would giggle,
knowing. . .

I loved your poems
about every Hydra
sprinkled over
many lands,
your shades of
sensibility flowing
on the wharf, awake

like a seabird
cawing at the action
on the waterfront

you told me
about the donkey boy
who was hung
like a horse, was
he the wizened old man
I saw gathering
memories on the
stone pier jutting into
the harbor?

I miss you
more than I miss
you, I guess it is
a love without
measure, you
were the man
who showed me
at least one way
out of solitude
and back to the self

I picture you
on Hydra in the 50s, sitting
poised to write
of the people
below your window, the
donkeys braying,
crowds milling
across the water
in the harbor over time
down to those catacombs
below the poem