

# 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

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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