

# Paisley Rekdal

## “When It Is Over It Will Be Over”

*after a pen and ink drawing by Troy Passey  
of a line by Edna St. Vincent Millay*

Hurricane of what must be  
    only feeling, this painting's  
sentence circling to black

on blank, ever-  
    tightening spiral  
of words collapsing

to their true gesture: meaning  
    what we read  
when not reading,

as the canvas buckles  
    in the damp: freckled  
like the someone

I once left sleeping  
    in a hotel room to swim  
the coast's cold shoals, fine veils

of sand kicked up by waves where  
    I found myself enclosed  
in light: sudden: bright

tunnel of minnows  
    like scatterings of  
diamond, seed pearl whorled

in the same  
    thoughtless thought  
around me: one column of scale

turning at a moment's decision,  
    a gesture I  
was inside or out

of, not touching but  
    moving in  
accord with them: they

would not wait for me, thickening  
    then breaking apart as I slid  
inside, reading me

for threat or flight by the lift  
    of my arm, as all  
they needed to know

of me was in the movement:  
    as all this sentence  
breaks down to O's and I's,

the remnants of someone's  
    desires or mine so that  
no matter if I return

to that cold coast, they will  
    never be there: the minnows  
in their bright spiraling

first through sight, then  
    through memory,  
the barest

shudderings of sense:  
    O and I  
parting the mouth with a cry

that contains—  
    but doesn't need—  
any meaning.