

Max Garland

Apparition

That's the moon come down to drink,
that apparition on the water. Or
it's the milk of human kindness
slinking like an eel.

Wind tears the cottonwood away
leaf by handsized leaf.
Small waves slap the pilings.

What is the proper number of kisses
for a man to leave the world?
The average depth of melancholy?
The approximate wetness of hope?

It's very expensive tonight, the wind
in the lakeside trees. I don't see how
I could afford to listen

if not for you in the world,
as the leaves sail in their numbers,
somewhere deep, quick and moonlike.