

## Curiosities

There was no treasure at the bottom of the sea,  
But they dredged up creatures  
That would be talked about for years.  
Hideous forms with no eyes, no fins,  
Helpless and translucent in jellied foetal skins,  
Sucking and gawping against the chill ocean wind.

The fishermen crossed themselves, and took  
A hook to the face of the first  
They hit an abscess and the thing burst  
The second simply quivered and died.

In the house of Sir Richard Grenville,  
I have heard talk of the last and third.  
The servants say he preserves it well,  
And when he sent Charles its likeness in a letter,  
The King wrote back it must come from hell.

When I asked Sir Richard himself, he smiled and said,  
Well, why don't you come and see?  
In that dimly lit room  
Where he had kept lepers and lions before,  
The acrid vapours of phosphorus burned my lungs  
And I heard rats running in the walls.

He had a Judas Cradle under a sheet  
And insisted its twin lay  
In the bowels of the Vatican,  
Behind a false wall operated by pulleys  
Bearing a portrait of Carloman III.

He motioned that I go the last few paces alone.  
And so, I approached the metal casket  
Which only seemed to me  
To contain a rotting man-o-war  
And our deep fear of the unseen.