

Leonardo Flies Again

When space trackers in Texas first heard the sound
of ultra-sonic breathing and radar heartbeats from the
first ship in orbit, they asked: "Is it a lion? Is
it a monkey? Is it a man?" But I recognized you.

Not as you died -- an exile in a far land -- or when you
were "also a painter" in your youth in Florence, or
when you were sketching the tortured bodies of horses
and men for your lost "Horrors of War."

Rather as you are in your secret notebooks filled with
sputnik visions, flying centuries ahead on that batlike
wing you hoped to put into orbit yourself.

Forgive us, Leonardo, for having laughed at your stretched-out,
batwing hands. At last you have arrived beyond the painting
and the sculpture and the war machines and waterworks you sold
to dukes and kings.

It is your breathing and your heartbeat we hear in the new
space rider, spanning the centuries, leaving behind this
grave-heavy planet to join the first man on earth who knows
where we are really going.

Question

Off shore tonight
sea cancers weigh anchor
and fins slash
the womb of oyster days
to come.

In the sky
star clusters wheel
over antheaps of light years
some other radar system
is telemetering.