

## **The Babylonian Exile**

### *A Verrazano Narrows Meditation*

I fell to earth in Babylon—Long Island,  
not the ancient Mesopotamian state.  
Just a major commuter terminus  
along the south shore of fish-shaped Paumanok  
out of Penn Station, changing at Jamaica  
as often as not. I grew up there and left  
for parts unknown (to me and mine at least)  
for reasons sound but later open to doubts,  
study and love primarily, none of which  
fell out quite as I'd planned, but that's okay—  
where else should I be but where I am?  
But now I've made a half-turn 'round the world,  
its bulk looms large between my then and now  
and some days I reflect on all I've left  
so far away, family and friends, of course,  
but other things as well: identities  
I bore for certain spells and put aside,  
personae strung upon a golden thread  
stretched like the Verrazano Narrows Bridge  
into mist and fog, its hither pier  
sunk in the earth amidst my infant squalls,  
but arcing into invisibility,  
thrumming, tensed against its farther end,  
as winds from off the ocean's boundless reach  
bow melodies upon its length that sing  
of the home my fall left dwindling between my heels.

