

BY MICHAEL SHORB

WATER PLANET

“The death of the oceans means the death of man”
—Jacques-Yves Cousteau

See it from space:
diamond continents
Green and granite
Cradled in rolling galaxies
Of charted water,
Salt and curving depths
forge and echo
The birth and death of
Man in a wet blur.

Despise what nurtures.
Take crowbar to coral,
Monofilament drift
Net to salmon and squid,
Repeat the
“no-one’s looking”
Anthem of the river slavers,
Alien chemical
Song of those who bury
Waste and death
in the source of life.

Put the resurrection engine
Of the world in overdrive,
Harvest piled bones
Gone to chalk on Antarctic beaches,
Raw stone eyes of thalidomide bass
Netted off New Jersey’s coast.

A sea’s no god to endure everything.
Or is, and dies before us,
Dies with its gliding dolphins
Cast like leaves; hardens
To a snow of petrochemical
and rosebud ash,
Leaving only massive tube worms
Tangled in magma rifts
On the deep sea’s
desert floor.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WAYNE LEVIN

