POEM

Whalefall and Boneflower and the Deep Sea Snow *Osedax mucofloris*

BY PHILIP GROSS

Great whale, grey whale with the map of all the oceans and their long songs in your brain, where do you go at the end of all your singing? Weary one, oh

great, grave, gone whale, who wove from that glittering string a net so strong it held the sea's heave to and fro, you were always the deep diver, deeper now than we can know

down and into the world beneath the world with whalefall and boneflower and the deep sea snow.

> What falls as snow a mile deep is skin and scales

the food we eat the food we are

one and the same dropped crumbs the body's waste

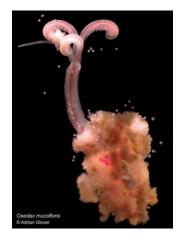
into the dark forgetting

of ourselves the flakes and cells of life let go

to drift to fall though stranger weather than we can imagine

sleepless dreamless deep

sea snow...



Kind worms, blind worms whom no one has seen or could love how do you work, so dark, so cold a mile below as delicate as seamstress fingers, to unpick the knots of bone?

Great bones, whale bones that sank through blue green twilight like an evening deepening forever slow on slow, to lie like spars of galleons down where no

light comes, and nothing lives, except ... Osedax mucofloris, swaying like a pale bouquet of petals, the worm-flowers grow.

This is the world beneath the world. where all life came from, maybe, maybe where we go,

where we come home

to whalefall and boneflower and the deep, the deep, the deep sea snow.