

Lee Upton

The Mussels

What kind of mussels were these,
what undulants —
the sea only yards off,
one torch on the beach
flagged and whipped,
and the mussels ringed about
on our plates. We ate as if we were
shore birds or some poachers
near to origins — a flight down
from our room, cantaloupe-colored,
with a fine string of black that showed through
the walls like a vein of iron.
At night the mussels gaped before us
as if swung aloft by a huge and gleaming arm
risen that instant from the sea
and plunging away by the light of a taper.
So we turn our pasts into mythology.