

In 'Landfall', the last of the poems of the middle section 'Outrider', Stow portrays a *persona* returning like a triumphant explorer to anchor in his own home waters:

And when they ask me where I have been, I shall say
I do not remember.

And when they ask me what I have seen, I shall say
I remember nothing.

And if they should ever tempt me to speak again,
I shall smile, and refrain.

Readers who have had the satisfaction of joining him in his fictional and poetical voyages will be grateful that Stow seems far from his final landfall, and is still tempted to share his discoveries.

All Systems Go

A thrust to send me outwards has begun;
the world recedes as from an astronaut.
I enter darkness infinite as space,
motionless still centre, whirled away too fast.
My world recedes and where is up or down?

Locked in a metal hull of binding black
where gravity seems doubled, not removed,
I float, disorientate of time
or, outside, shuffle in space-diver's boots
rehearsing moves attached by lines of love.

Flawed by ignorance of stormy distance,
remote voices from the receiving world
crackle commands and chirrup disciplines.
Only your voice and mine make spot-on contact,
whispering re-entry as a world recedes.

JOHN YOUNGER