

**Peter Lugg**

**HERMAN MELVILLE**

You had a thousand dreams of writing  
yet left New York for whaling.

The sea curled round your pen  
and you wrote six novels —  
a balm against years of obscurity.

Not seeing the bleak times ahead,  
you slid from the mansions of youth  
into the icy waters of nonentity.

Years passed.

Summoned again to the discipline of desk,  
you try to write. Spectres attend,  
urging words which will not come.

As you start your greatest work,  
you're Ishmael at the mast-head,  
praying for a glimpse of broken water.