

On Belay

DAVID EVANS

Three feet wide the ledge and above
One, bound to me by a thousand deaths,
Catclaws upon his universe. Balanced,
Caught with nails, outcrosses Self
Around the corners, clings firm,
And moves from night.

Below,
A rotting silence; and beyond,
Pale haze.

A pause. The rope
Swings slack, grows taut again
And through my hands I feel once more
His upward surge. No motion now
Not guarded by my loins
(God grant them fast)
And the long cord spinning out
all time.

