

Wading at Wellfleet

In one of the Assyrian wars
a chariot first saw the light
that bore sharp blades around its wheels.

That chariot from Assyria
went rolling down mechanically
to take the warriors by the heels.

A thousand warriors in the sea
could not consider such a war
as that the sea itself contrives
but hasn't put in action yet.

This morning's glitterings reveal
the sea is "all a case of knives."
Lying so close, they catch the sun,
the spokes directed at the shin.

The chariot front is blue and great.
The war rests wholly with the waves:
they try revolving, but the wheels
give way; they will not bear the weight.

-Elizabeth Bishop