



**THE SINKING OF THE WAHINE & THE FALL OF ICARUS  
A TRANSLATIONAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM**

by  
Peter Williams

Yes, they were right about suffering, the old masters.  
It takes place while other things proceed—  
other things that do not stop  
just because from time to time there are disasters.  
On that pale autumn day, while many innocents were drowning,  
unknowing students wrestled with their lecture notes,  
preparing for a test and frowning  
over some word they could no longer read.  
But the Sufi masters were right as well.  
"This too will pass", they say.  
Icarus plummets by his father with a yell.  
All Daedalus can do is fly away,  
and in old age remember he once lost a son, and there were boats.

Breughel called his work a landscape, showed the land.  
The patient fisherman, careful line in hand,  
leans out from a safe perch upon his trusted element.  
The ships head for a harbour, to escape the sea.  
Ploughman and shepherd do not turn away from the poor lad.  
They simply concentrate so much on what might be had  
from the earth, that they ignore the ocean and the firmament.  
Fixed on the soil, they do not spy the young apprentice falling free.

*after Brueghel (and after Auden and after William Carlos Williams)*

