

'the little grey lady of the sea'

Martha's Vineyard is running fat
with high-end Bermudas
Melissa Odabash beachwear -
well-heeled bohemia

let's escape
take a boat trip
to Nantucket

we loved that spring
at the cedar-shingle hotel
with the creaking rusting sign
and the little grey creaking
maitresse de maison
who brushing the stoep
with a besom broom
sang Huguenot villanelles
each day before dawn

racing rattling bicycles down
Main Street cobbles,
showing off, you fell off
and hobbled the holiday
with your leg encased

I wrote obscenities
at the top of the cast
where only I, not
Mme Du Cros, could see

the smiling maitresse patted your head
made you torte and cherries –
'nourriture de confort',
or so she said.

I heard Mme Du Cros died -
her heart gave out
one winter storm too many
they put her to earth in Prospect Hill

we'll seek her out
pay our respects

it will be good to see
the place
our little grey lady lays

I'll gentle
a pinch of your ashes
over her grave.