

Seascape with the Fallen Icarus

Along a North Sea marshland, black shapes
settled in the distant shallows
look like sea-birds swarmed down
from a great migration. Reeds, marsh-grass

glisten nearby as the tide seeps
inland, dark, glinting a few
sharded rainbows where the low sun
burns through haze. Offshore

the hull of a huge tanker rises
calm on the ink-black wash, the sky
dissolving into water, the slow lap
of tide-swell bearing clumps of seaweed

and Icarus washed up among the reeds,
his charred wings slick with crude oil.
Larger than any sea-bird, he
compels attention to the scene's

right foreground, where his corpse intrudes
its tainted mythic presence into
what could be a modern masterpiece
in oil on brackish water.

John N. Miller