



I met History once, but he ain't recognize me

Neither History nor Progress can "recognize" him, And even human love fails. But there is the sea, with its unrest threatening and beautiful and beckoning to his unrest. But in even danger the sea can image the self. And that self recognizes that the only "weapon" is poetry and poets

...love the poetry  
that kills them, as drowned sailors the sea.

That is, man must take the risk of his imagination in the discovery of values in the world of imagination in which values are born and asserted. Imagination is the healing and creative element in man.. And this poem is the key to this poet's achievement, and it demands final risks.

And here it may be remarked that "The Schooner Flight" can take a place besides Wordsworth's "Prelude" ~~and his history of the birth of poetry for a poet, and feel not a whit diminished.~~

It is also the key to Walcott's later performance, in style and otherwise.

For one thing this poem governs the further development of Walcott. I shall indulge myself with one observation. In the style here Walcott discovers and displays the style which gives him an important place in the history of the art in our time. It is the discovery, no, the re-discovery for a generation or so, of the various factors that make for a truly dramatic sense of rhythm. I am not speaking of mere meter, or of metrical shifts as such. Meter is only one factor here (though even meter is often <sup>now</sup> ignored). Walcott does not ignore meter, but he knows what its place is, and the various contributions here involved. Assuming skill with meter, the key factor seems to be the muscular interplay of vowel and vowel "pitch" or the "weighting" of consonants, factors constantly played against meter and its possible expressive variations. "Well, Walcott has a secret of his great eloquence. He is a master of the fact that poetry is, after all, an art of voice, even if we hear it only in our mind -- and in our muscles.

If I intrude upon your pleasure, at least my heat was in the right place.

No I turn you over to the voice of a master.